

Josephus on the Servile Origins of the Jews in Egypt

David A. Friedman
Wolfson College

D.Phil.
Faculty of Theology and Religion
University of Oxford

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Abstract (short)

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David A. Friedman
Wolfson College
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The Exodus story of the Israelites' slavery in Egypt and subsequent redemption was central to Jewish accounts of their national origins and was an important component of Jewish self-identification in antiquity. Although Greek and Latin sources appear ignorant of the Exodus story, ancient ethnographies of the Jews in non-Jewish sources claim that the Jews were originally Egyptian. This thesis examines how Josephus presents the Exodus story of the Jews' servile national origins in Egypt to a Roman audience who had biases against slaves, freedmen, and Egyptians, and little knowledge of Jewish origins apart from reports that they were Egyptian by origin.

Josephus's first work *Jewish War*, a politico-military history, includes tangential remarks about Jewish origins, but implies in the proem that the Jews were originally Egyptian. *Jewish Antiquities*, which rewrites the biblical account of Jewish origins, explicitly denies that the Jews were originally Egyptian and deliberately omits mention of the Jews' servitude in Egypt at important points in the narrative where it would have been expected. In *Against Apion*, an apologia, Josephus subtly uses keywords and the rhetorical technique of *insinuatio* to prove that the Jews were not originally Egyptian without stating openly that this is a goal of the work.

Several factors explain these results. Aristotle's theory of natural slavery, which posits that slaves are innately defective, was part of the ideological assumptions of first century CE Roman elites. Romans were also ambivalent about their own partly-servile origins in Romulus's asylum. Influenced by Augustan propaganda about Actium, first-century Roman sources deride Egyptians with a range of negative stereotypes. Josephus denies that the Jews were Egyptian and omits their servile origins at important points in the narrative where the Bible mentions it in order to portray the Jews as favorably as possible.

Abstract (long)

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As ethnic identity is a social construction and a story of shared descent is central to its definition, the exodus story of the Jews' servitude in Egypt and subsequent redemption may have been the most important component of Jewish self-identification in antiquity. The Jews' story of their origins, however, would have struck an ancient audience as odd. Although several slave nations were known in antiquity, the Jews may have been the only people in the ancient world to have made a history of national servitude part of their self-identification. Ancient ethnographies classified peoples as either autochthonous or formed by migration and used the circumstances of their origins to explain a nation's customs and habits. Although the migration from Egypt formed them as a nation, the Jews did not identify themselves as Egyptians by origin and instead ascribed their customs to an act of divine revelation at Sinai.

Presenting the exodus story of the Jews' origins to a first-century Roman audience would have been problematic because of Roman prejudices against slaves, freedmen, and Egyptians, and Roman ambivalence about their own partly servile origins in Romulus's asylum. Aristotle's theory of natural slavery held that slaves had innately defective characters and that entire nations could be composed of natural slaves. The ideology of natural slavery was part of the intellectual and cultural assumptions of members of first-century CE Roman elites, including Josephus. Augustan era manumission reforms suggest that Roman society was sensitive to the social status of slaves and freedmen. The inversion of status caused by the power of imperial freedman made them a target of harsh criticism by Roman writers in Josephus's time.

First-century Roman elites held anti-Egyptian stereotypes inherited from Greek thought and incorporated into Augustan propaganda after Actium. Although Greek literature often praised ancient Egypt for its age and wisdom, it also castigated contemporary Egyptians as licentious, servile, and uncivilized, and derided Egyptian animal worship. Influenced by Augustan propaganda, which presented the conflict between Octavian (later called Augustus) and Antony as a foreign war against Egypt, first-century CE Roman sources portray Egyptians as licentious and deceitful, and ridicule Egyptian animal worship. Josephus's works echo these attitudes.

Gentile authors did not know the Jews' own story of their servile origins, but they nearly unanimously claimed that the Jews were originally Egyptians. Given Roman prejudices against slaves, freedmen, and Egyptians, presenting the exodus story to a Roman audience would have been difficult. Against this background, this thesis examines how Josephus treats the exodus story of the Jews' origins in each of his three major works, *Jewish War*, *Jewish Antiquities*, and *Against Apion*, in the context of each

work's genre and goals.

The thesis proceeds in eight chapters.

Chapter I introduces the study and places it in context. Much previous scholarship on Josephus has focussed on using him as a historical source and examined whether his attitudes toward Rome and Judaism changed over time. Research has also explored his rewriting of the Bible in *Jewish Antiquities*, investigating general Hellenistic influences. A trend in recent scholarship is an increasing focus on Josephus's Roman background. This study investigates Josephus portrayal of the Jews' national origins as slaves in Egypt in the context of specific first-century Roman attitudes towards slaves and Egyptians. Although a brief article by J. Barclay highlights Josephus's concern to show that the Jews were not originally Egyptian in *Against Apion*, no previous scholarship has examined how Josephus presents Jewish origins in all of his major works in the context of first-century Roman prejudices.

A. D. Smith argues that a story of shared origins is the central component of ethnic identity. The exodus story of the Jews' national origin as slaves in Egypt is the basis of all biblical historiography and the primary discriminant of Jewish ethnicity. Josephus and the New Testament suggest that celebration of Passover in Jerusalem was central to Jewish practice in the Second Temple period and that the exodus story was key to Jewish self-identification.

Although Josephus probably wrote all of his major works, *Jewish War*, *Jewish Antiquities*, and *Against Apion*, for the same primary audience in Rome, each belongs to a different genre and has different goals. Understanding these differences is crucial for analyzing the evidence of each work. *Jewish War*, a politico-military history in the style of Thucydides, aims to recount the Jews' revolt against Rome. This makes it a useful control in analyzing the accounts of Jewish origins in *Jewish Antiquities*, which retells Jewish history from Creation to 66 CE, and *Against Apion*, an *apologia*.

Chapter II examines pre-second century CE Jewish sources on Jewish origins, beginning with the foundational account in Genesis-Exodus, and then investigates references back to Genesis-Exodus in the rest of the Hebrew Bible and accounts of Jewish origins in extra-biblical literature. These sources do not all agree. The book of Judith and the Hellenistic Jewish author Artapanus appear to highlight that the Jews were not originally Egyptian by origin, but emphasize that they came from elsewhere. Philo, by contrast, presents a more ambivalent picture which depicts Egypt as the Jews' second fatherland. Philo and other sources portray the Israelites as engaging in Egyptian cultic practices.

Exodus presents the Israelites as subject to compulsory labor which it characterizes as "slavery." Although a few sources mention or omit the Israelites' servitude in Egypt where it might have been expected, Philo and *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* strengthen the Exodus story by depicting the Israelites as actual or potential chattel slaves.

Chapter III considers the depictions of Jewish origins in pre-second century CE Greek and Latin sources. Although no gentile writers before Celsus, who wrote in the late second century CE, appear to have known the Exodus account of the Jews' servile origins, several Greek and Latin ethnographies of the Jews claim that they were originally Egyptians. Tacitus, Josephus's younger contemporary, wrote the most detailed

ethnography of the Jews in antiquity and ascribed the Jews' customs to their Egyptian origins. Strabo explained the Jews' prosperity in contemporary Alexandria by noting that the Jews were originally Egyptian. Plutarch also relates, but does not endorse, a story that links Jewish origins with Egypt. Josephus could reasonably have assumed that his Roman audience thought the Jews were originally Egyptian, but did not know the Jews' own story of their servitude.

Chapter IV investigates anti-Egyptian biases in first-century CE Rome, including in the works of Josephus. Although Greek depictions of Egypt are ambivalent, the portrayals of Octavian's war with Antony in prose historiography, public monuments, coinage, and the poetry of Vergil and Propertius suggest the ubiquity of anti-Egyptian stereotypes in the Augustan period. These negative stereotypes, and derision of Egyptian animal-worship specifically, recur in Roman literature contemporary with Josephus, including the works of Tacitus, Juvenal, and Pliny. Josephus's skillful use of these stereotypes in *Antiquities* and *Against Apion* suggests he knew them well.

Chapter V explores Josephus's depiction of the Jews' national origins in *Jewish War*, *Jewish Antiquities*, and *Against Apion* in order to investigate what he says about the Jews' origins in Egypt. Josephus explains in the proem to *Jewish War* that he will *not* be treating the Jews' ancient history, which would include an account of their migration from Egypt and their long wanderings before they settled down. An ancient audience would probably have concluded, as Greek and Latin sources reported, that the Jews were originally Egyptians who departed Egypt as migrants. By contrast, Josephus twice explicitly rejects this idea in *Antiquities* and contends that the Jews were Mesopotamian, although he also cites Strabo's claim that the Jews were originally Egyptian. Josephus may have omitted the golden calf episode from his account in *Antiquities* of Exodus 32 in part because a Roman audience would probably have interpreted veneration of the golden calf as Apis-worship explained by the Israelites' Egyptian origins. Josephus highlights in the conclusion to *Against Apion* that he has successfully proven that the Jews were not Egyptian by origin. However, he fails to mention this goal in the work's introduction, apparently deliberately, and leads his readers to this conclusion subtly by use of keywords and the rhetorical technique of *insinuatō*. This suggests that Josephus found allegations that the Jews were originally Egyptian very damaging and believed that they demanded careful refutation.

Chapter VI studies ideological and political biases against slaves and freedmen in first century CE Rome. Aristotle's doctrine of natural slavery, which applied both to individuals and to nations, was widely known in antiquity and was probably part of mainstream thought in Rome. It is implicit in the work of Seneca and Epictetus, and explicit in Bryson, who taught in late first-century CE Rome and influenced Musonius Rufus and Dio Chrysostom. Augustus's series of manumission reforms, which created new categories of non-citizen freedmen, suggests that maintaining and broadening status distinctions between slave, freed, and free-born was very important. The power of imperial freedmen caused status anxiety in their social betters, senators and equestrians, and this explains the harsh invective against freedmen in the writings of Tacitus, Suetonius, and the younger Pliny. Unlike Livy and Plutarch, Dionysius of Halicarnassus explicitly denies that Romulus included slaves in his well-known asylum on the Capitoline, which suggests that even partly servile origins in the remote past could be a continuing stain—as a barb of Juvenal's suggests.

Josephus appears to have shared or catered to his audience's biases against slaves and freedmen. Josephus's descriptions of the Jewish laws of marriage and of valid witnesses use the terminology and concepts of Aristotle's theory of natural slavery. *Antiquities*' disparaging portrait of Gaius's freedmen Callistus echoes the negative depictions of imperial freedmen in Josephus's younger contemporaries Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny.

Chapter VII analyzes how Josephus depicts the Jews' servile origins. *Jewish War* mentions the Jews' servitude in Egypt once in a brief explanation of the festival of unleavened bread, but does not refer to it in the eight other references to the festivals of Passover or unleavened bread. Josephus appears deliberately to omit mention of the Jews' servitude in Egypt at important points in *Antiquities*, including the account of God's promise to Abraham in Gn 15 and in his version of Ex 1, although he adds occasional references to it, for example in his version of 1 Sam 12. Josephus's evident sensitivity to servile origins extends to individual figures from the patriarchal period: he explicitly claims that Jacob's wives Zilpah and Bilhah were "not slaves but subordinates" and portrays Joseph, using the terminology of Aristotle, as noble and well-born, and not a slave by nature. *Against Apion* has much to say about stories of the Jews' Egyptian origins, but never mentions slavery.

Chapter VIII proposes possible explanations for the evidence laid out in the preceding chapters and offers conclusions. Josephus knew that his Roman audience had heard claims that the Jews were originally Egyptian and that they held negative stereotypes about Egyptians. His explicit denial of Egyptian origins in *Antiquities* and the great care he takes in *Apion* to prove that the Jews were not Egyptians suggest he found these allegations damning.

Because the story of the Jews' servitude is central to the biblical narrative, it would have been difficult for Josephus to omit every reference to it. However, Josephus's familiarity with ideological and political biases against slaves and freedmen in first-century CE Rome probably explains why he omits mention of the Jews' servitude at important points in *Antiquities*. Josephus might also have known that Roman ambivalence about Romulus's asylum meant that the Jews's servile origins in the remote past could taint contemporary Jews—especially since many Jews had been enslaved and brought to Rome after the revolt. Josephus's careful account of his own imprisonment and the special way he was freed by Titus, and his portrayal of how he redeemed his captured friends in Jerusalem after the revolt, probably reflects a sensitivity to the lasting taint of even temporary bondage and may also have influenced his presentation of the Jews' servile origins.

The results of this study demonstrate that identifying Josephus's audience, and the genre and goals of his works, is indispensable to understanding them. Josephus uses the rhetorical and interpretive strategy that best suits his immediate goals in a given context. These local goals may or may not be identical with the overall goals of the work. Understanding Josephus's argument depends on simultaneously identifying his goals and interpreting his rhetorical strategy.

Josephus thought his audience knew of and probably believed claims that the Jews were Egyptian by origin. Further research might reveal the influence of this evidently common view in other evidence.

Lastly, this study underscores the importance of close reading that is both naive

in trying not to import modern ideas to an ancient text, and knowing in remaining aware of the text's attempts to manipulate the reader in support of the author's goals.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations for classical authors not listed here follow the conventions in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th edition or, if not specified there, the 9th edition of LSJ.

Abbreviations for ancient Jewish and early Christian authors not listed here follow the conventions in *The SBL Handbook of Style*. Edited by P.H. Alexander, J.F. Kutsko, et al. (Peabody, MA: Hendrikson Publishers, 1999).

AB	Anchor Bible
<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>Ap.</i>	Josephus, <i>Against Apion</i>
APA	American Philological Association Classical Resources Series
Aris. Ex.	Aristeas the Exegete
Artap.	Artapanus
Asc.	Asconius, <i>Commentaries on Speeches by Cicero</i>
<i>B. Qam.</i>	<i>Bava Qama</i>
<i>Ber.</i>	<i>Berakhot</i>
BNJ	Brill New Jacoby. Edited by I. Worthington. (Leiden: Brill, 2016). http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-s-new-jacoby .
BJC	<i>Flavius Josephus, Translation and Commentary</i> . Edited by S. Mason. (Leiden: Brill, 2000-).
Bry.	Bryson Arabus. <i>Economy, Family and Society From Rome to Islam: A Critical Edition, English Translation, and Study of Bryson's Management of the Estate</i> . Translated by S. Swain. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)
CAF	<i>Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta</i> . Edited by T. Kock. 3 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1880-1888).
CIS	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum</i>
Clem.	Clement of Alexandria
<i>Deipn.</i>	Athenaeus, <i>Deipnosophistae</i>
Dem.	Demetrius the Chronographer
Dio	Cassius Dio
Eus.	Eusebius
<i>Exod. Rab.</i>	<i>Exodus Rabbah</i>
FGrH	<i>Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker</i> . Edited by F. Jacoby. (Leiden: Brill, 1954-1964).
FHJA	<i>Fragments From Hellenistic Jewish Authors</i> . Edited by C.R.

	Holladay. 4 vols. SBL Texts and Translations: Pseudepigrapha Series. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1983-1996).
<i>FRHist</i>	<i>The Fragments of the Roman Historians</i> . Edited by T.J. Cornell. 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
<i>Gen. Rab.</i>	<i>Genesis Rabbah</i>
<i>Git.</i>	<i>Gittin</i>
<i>HALOT</i>	Koehler, L, W Baumgartner, and Stamm. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by M.E.J. Richardson. 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1994-2000).
Holladay <i>FHJA</i>	Holladay, C.R. (1983-1996). <i>Fragments From Hellenistic Jewish Authors</i> . 4 vols. SBL Texts and Translations: Pseudepigrapha Series. (Atlanta: Scholars Press).
JPS	<i>JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh</i> . 2 ed. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1999).
<i>Ket.</i>	<i>Ketubbot</i>
<i>Kel.</i>	<i>Kelim</i>
<i>LAB</i>	Pseudo-Philo, <i>Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
<i>Life</i>	Josephus, <i>Life</i> .
LSJ	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Edited by H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H.S. Jones. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
LXX	Septuagint
<i>m.</i>	Mishnah
MT	Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible
NETS	<i>A New English Translation of the Septuagint</i> . Edited by A. Pietersma and B.G. Wright. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
<i>OCD4</i>	<i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> . 4th ed. Edited by S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth and E. Eidenow. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
<i>OTP</i>	<i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . Edited by J.H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983-1985).
<i>P. E.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Preparatio Evangelica</i>
<i>Pes.</i>	<i>Pesaḥim</i>
<i>Phot.</i>	Photius, <i>Bibliotheca</i>
PL	Patrologia latina [= Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Latina]. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 217 vols. (Paris, 1844–1864).

Pomp. Trog.	Pompeius Trogus
<i>Qid.</i>	<i>Qiddushin</i>
<i>R.H.</i>	<i>Rosh HaShanah</i>
<i>Sanh.</i>	<i>Sanhedrin</i>
Schürer-Vermes	Schürer, E. (1973-1987). <i>The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ 175 B.C. - A.D. 135</i> . Rev. F. Millar, G. Vermes, M. Goodman and M. Black. 3 Vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).
SEJ	Société des Études Juives
Stern	Stern, M. (1974-1984). <i>Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism</i> . 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities).
Str.	Strabo, <i>Geography</i>
<i>Ta'an</i>	<i>Ta'anit</i> .
Theod.	Theodotus
TLG	Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. Directed by M. Pantalea (Irvine: Regents of the University of California). http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/ .
<i>War</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i>
<i>y.</i>	Jerusalem Talmud
<i>Yeb.</i>	<i>Yevamot</i>

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

The Problem

As the defining account of its nationhood and covenant with God, the story of the Israelites' slavery in Egypt and subsequent redemption was central to Jewish self-identification in antiquity. The foundational account of Jewish origins in Genesis-Exodus describes God's promise to Abraham to make his descendants into a great nation which will possess the land of Canaan, but only after four hundred years of slavery in a foreign land. Exodus depicts the partial fulfillment of this promise in the Israelites' collective servitude in Egypt. The account in Genesis also portrays several important figures from the patriarchal period as potential or actual slaves, including Esau, whom it describes as the future slave of Jacob, Zilpah and Bilhah, Jacob's secondary wives and the mothers of four of his twelve sons, and Joseph, whose sale into slavery in Egypt and subsequent restoration to freedom prefigures the story of the Israelites' servitude in Egypt and redemption. Josephus wrote for a Roman audience unfamiliar with the Jews' own tradition about their origins, but which probably thought that the Jews were Egyptians by descent. This thesis examines how Josephus presents the story of the Jews' ancient origins as slaves in Egypt to a Roman audience with prejudices against slaves and freedmen, ambivalence about traditions of Rome's own partly servile origins, and sharply negative views of Egypt and Egyptians.

Previous Scholarship and this Study

Flavius Josephus wrote works in four genres of Greek prose which together

constitute the largest extant body of Greek historiography from the first century CE, and are the central source for Jewish history from c. 150 BCE to c. 75 CE. Examining how Josephus presented Jewish origins in his different works is a central focus of this study.

Josephus's writings provide important evidence for Jewish Studies, New Testament studies, Greek and Roman history, and for the literary study of Greek historiography. Recent scholarship has investigated Josephus's corpus from a variety of perspectives. Studies have drawn on Josephus as a historical source for first century CE Judea: scholars have compared Josephus's account of the Essenes with the Dead Sea Scrolls,¹ and examined his work for information on prophetic figures in Judea,² on the Sicarii,³ on variety in first century Judean theology,⁴ and on the role of Passover in "reconstructing Judaism" after the destruction of the temple.⁵ Other work has focussed on Josephus himself, ranging from an account of his theology⁶ to an examination of his view of the Samaritans.⁷ Several studies have compared *Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities*, looking for development in Josephus's worldview over time, and reached a range of conclusions: Josephus went from becoming a Roman apologist to a religious nationalist;⁸ Josephus's religious standards changed from being priestly to being

1. Beall 1988.

2. Gray 1993.

3. Brighton 2009.

4. Klawans 2012.

5. Colautti 2002.

6. Attridge 1976.

7. Pummer 2009.

8. Cohen 1979.

rabbinic;⁹ Josephus changed from a Palestinian Jew to a diasporan Jew.¹⁰ Scholars have also addressed methodological issues. Given Josephus's status as a participant in the revolt against Rome, and as a historian and interpreter of those events, important studies have addressed how to use Josephus as a historical source.¹¹ Josephus drew on sources for events he did not witness and, as was common in ancient historiography, he does not identify them; studies have thus investigated Josephus's use of sources and queried whether he was merely a(n incompetent) compiler or whether he used his sources creatively in support of his own ends.¹² Other research has explored literary issues such as Josephus's use of embedded letters¹³ and prayer,¹⁴ compared accounts of the same events from a narratological perspective,¹⁵ or examined Josephus in the context of critical geography.¹⁶

Scholarship from roughly the last fifteen years has increasingly focussed on studying Josephus in his Roman context. Recent collections of essays about Josephus investigate his Flavian Roman background,¹⁷ and a collection on Flavian Rome includes papers about Josephus specifically.¹⁸ Much of this scholarship centers on identifying

9. Schwartz 1990.

10. Tuval 2013.

11. McLaren 1998, Rajak 2002; See also Goodman 1987 20–21, cf. Goodman 2007 9–10.

12. Generally: Cohen 1979, Schwartz 2013, Tropper 2016; on *Ant.* 19: Wiseman 1991, Goud 1996.

13. Olson 2010.

14. Jonquière 2007.

15. Landau 2006.

16. Vonder Bruegge 2016.

17. Edmondson et al. 2005, Sievers and Lembi 2005.

18. Boyle and Dominik 2003.

Romans as Josephus's primary audience.¹⁹ Studies of *Against Apion*, for example, have noted that the work appeals to a Roman audience by portraying Jews as paragons of Roman virtues²⁰ and as *Judaei togati*.²¹

Work on *Jewish Antiquities*, an important source for this study, often focuses on general "Hellenistic" influences or, if it examines *Antiquities*'s Roman background, reaches very broad conclusions. Sterling contends that Josephus sought to "Hellenize[...] native traditions" in *Antiquities*.²² Feldman's voluminous work on *Antiquities* often analyzes Josephus's portraits of biblical figures to identify character traits found in Greco-Roman heroes²³ or highlights apologetic concerns like a desire to prove that Jews are not misanthropes.²⁴ The Roman issues that Feldman identifies in *Antiquities* are often very general, such as a respect for "law and order"²⁵ or his claim that any reference to a messiah is *ipso facto* seditious.²⁶ Niehoff concludes that Josephus drew on Hellenistic virtues and his own personal history in the *Antiquities*' portrayal of Joseph. Spilsbury highlights apologetic components in *Antiquities* directed to a Graeco-Roman audience, including the idea that Jews are virtuous and peaceable, and portrayals of the patriarchs in Hellenistic guise.²⁷ The only issue he explicitly identifies as Roman is

19. Including Mason 1998, Mason 2003, and Mason 2005. See the discussion of Josephus's audience on page 31 ff.

20. Goodman 1999.

21. Barclay 2000 232.

22. Sterling 1992 19.

23. Feldman 1998b; Feldman 1998c.

24. Feldman 1998c 557–558; cf. Feldman 1998c 661.

25. Feldman 1998c 552.

26. Feldman 1998c 554–555; cf. Feldman 1998c 661.

27. Spilsbury 1998 93, 223.

the depiction of the Jews as a conservative people.²⁸ By contrast, Van Ehrenkrook's recent study focusses specifically on Josephus's Roman background in examining how Josephus presents Jewish notions of aniconism to a Roman audience in *Jewish War* and *Antiquities*.²⁹

Investigations of *Against Apion*, another central text for this study, often disagree about the goals of the work. Attridge and Spilsbury accept Josephus's claim in the proem (*Ap.* 1.1–4) and maintain that *Apion*'s primary goal is demonstrating the Jews' antiquity.³⁰ Cohen and Bilde, however, contend that the work is an attack on Greek historiography, although Cohen notes the oddity that *Apion* primarily attacks Egyptian sources.³¹ Although Mason argues that *Apion* is an invitation to gentiles interested in Judaism "to embrace Judean philosophy,"³² Kasher rejects the view that *Apion* is a proselytizing work and comments that it aims only at arousing sympathy.³³ Goodman suggests that, contrary to *Apion*'s stated goal of proving the Jews' antiquity, the work's actual goal is defending Judaism against anti-Jewish Flavian propaganda by stressing that the Jews possess the character traits of highly moral, ancient Romans.³⁴ Barclay argues that *Apion* depicts the Jews as exemplars of Roman virtues to prove that Judaism is compatible with Rome.³⁵

28. Spilsbury 1998 222–223.

29. Ehrenkrook 2011.

30. Attridge 1976 60–61; Spilsbury 1996 350.

31. Bilde 1996 98–101; Cohen 1988.

32. Mason 1996 188.

33. Kasher 1996 153–154.

34. Goodman 1999.

35. Barclay 2000; Barclay 2016 82.

A few scholars have addressed part of the subject of this thesis, the issue of the Jews' possible Egyptian origins, but most of the work on this topic focusses solely on *Against Apion*. Droge opines that strife in Alexandria and stories of the Jews's expulsion from Egypt made Josephus reverse the tradition in previous Hellenistic Jewish literature that linked the Jews' early history with Egypt. In contrast to Philo and Artapanus, who emphasized this connection, Josephus reverses the relationship in *Apion* by making the Jews the source of Egyptian culture.³⁶ Droge also observes that *Apion* emphasizes that the Jews were not Egyptians, but he does not develop this argument.³⁷ Berthelot explores the use of negative Greco-Roman stereotypes about Egyptians in *Apion*.³⁸ Alone in previous scholarship, Barclay comments on these stereotypes and highlights Josephus's desire to prove in *Apion* that the Jews are not Egyptian by origin.³⁹

This study is the first to focus on Josephus's Roman context by examining how Josephus presents the exodus story of the Jews' national origins as slaves in Egypt to his primary Roman audience in *Jewish War*, *Jewish Antiquities*, and *Against Apion*, in light of specific late first century CE factors: Roman ignorance of Jewish tradition, prejudice against slaves and Egyptians, and ambivalence about their own partly servile origins. Spilsbury's recent chapter on Josephus's presentation of the exodus story in *Antiquities* focusses on Josephus's Hellenized portrait of Moses and notes that Josephus makes stylistic and apologetic changes to the story to suit a Greco-Roman audience, but fails to note all but one of the issues which this study identifies.⁴⁰

36. Droge 1996 139–141.

37. Droge 1996 122, 122 n. 14.

38. Berthelot 2000.

39. Barclay 2004.

40. Spilsbury 2014. For example, page 471 analyzes Josephus's retelling of Ex 1, but

Ethnic Identity and the Exodus Story

Ethnic identity is a social construction,⁴¹ determined by cultural attributes⁴² such as the historical memories and the central values of a group,⁴³ and not by biology or language.⁴⁴ Of the six chief features which he argues distinguish an ethnic group, Anthony D. Smith identifies a myth of common descent as “the primary definer[.]” and “the *sine qua non*” of ethnicity.⁴⁵ Similarly, Jonathan Hall comments that a myth of shared descent is the central feature that defines an ethnic group and stresses that consensual agreement on the *putative* common ancestry that the myth describes renders irrelevant “the genealogical reality of such claims.”⁴⁶ The exodus story is an account of the Jews’ collective origins as “the children of Israel,” the descendants of Abraham to whom God promised the land of Canaan, but only after four hundred years of slavery in a foreign land (Gn 15), who were enslaved in Egypt, liberated, and given the Law at Mt Sinai (Ex 1–31), before God led them through the wilderness to Canaan. The Bible

does not mention the omission of the Jews’ slavery. Page 481 devotes a paragraph to Josephus’s presentation of the first commandment, but does not note that the *Antiquities*’ version omits the description of Egypt as “the place of slavery.” Page 473 comments on Moses’s encounter with Reul’s daughters at the well, but does note that the daughters describe Moses as “a stranger” rather than as an Egyptian. Pages 481–482 note the omission of the golden calf incident, but attribute it to Josephus’s pressing interest in priestly matters (see Chapter 5 B2, page 206 ff. below).

41. Hall 1997 19, cf. Smith 1986 22.

42. Smith 1986 21.

43. Smith 1986 15–16.

44. Smith 1986 21, 26–28; Hall 1997 19–22, 23.

45. Smith 1986 15, 23. For the six components of ethnic identity, see Smith 1986 22–30.

46. Emphasis added. Hall 1997 25.

depicts each Jew as a descendant of the children of Israel and thus of Abraham.⁴⁷

Examining the other five of Smith's six components of ethnic identity reveals the central role of the exodus story in distinguishing the Jews as an ethnic group.

1. A collective name.

In Exodus, "the children of Israel," בני ישראל, are the literal sons of Jacob/Israel in Ex 1:1 and from Ex 1:7 onwards the collective name for all of Abraham's descendants.⁴⁸

2. A shared history

Smith emphasizes that the exodus traditions about the twelve tribes should be seen as "a partly valid record of Israelite origins."⁴⁹ More broadly, Deuteronomy presents the exodus story as the common history of all Jews. Moses specifies that a parent answer a child's query about any of the laws by saying עַבְדִּים הָייְנוּ לַפְרֵעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt" (Dt 6:21). The recital that Dt 26 specifies for the festival of first fruits directs each (male) individual to recite the Israelites' shared history, beginning with their Aramean forefather who went to Egypt with his family, their oppression and liberation, and the gift of the land (Dt 26:5–10).

3. A distinctive shared culture.

Smith notes that language and religion are the most common elements of a shared culture and specifies that religion distinguishes the Jews as an ethnic group.⁵⁰ Smith includes customs, institutions, laws, folklore, dress, and food as distinctive elements of

47. Paul emphasizes that he is a descendant of Abraham (Rom 11:1, Phil 3:5).

48. References to בני ישראל in Gn 32:33 and 36:31 imply a later point of view. On בני ישראל as a collective in Exodus, see Chapter 2 A1c page 46 ff.

49. Smith 1986 25.

50. Smith 1986 26–27.

culture. The Pentateuch justifies many specific laws and practices by reference to the exodus story and exhorts observation of the law as whole by mentioning the exodus.⁵¹

4. An association with a specific land.

Gn 15 explicitly links God's promise of the land to Abraham's descendants with their servitude in a foreign land. God specifies that Abraham's descendants will inherit the land from the Nile to the Euphrates and lists the peoples whose land Abraham's offspring will possess (Gn 15:18–20). At the burning bush, God directs Moses to tell the elders of Israel that he will take them to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, and others, recapitulating in large part the list from Gn 15 (Ex 3:16–17).

5. A sense of solidarity.

Weinfeld describes the first fruits recital in Dt 26 and the explanations of the Passover sacrifice directed to children ("He smote the Egyptians, but saved our houses," Ex 12:25–27; JPS) and the redemption of the first born ("It was with a mighty hand that the Lord brought us out from Egypt, the house of bondage," Ex 13:14; JPS) as examples of "formal national education" and "the basis of ancient Israelite education."⁵² Such instruction no doubt encouraged Israelites from all eras to regard themselves as having come out of Egypt personally and fostered a sense of communal solidarity.

The exodus story of the Israelites' servitude in Egypt, their liberation by God, and the subsequent covenant at Sinai is central to the Pentateuch and significantly shapes the narrative. God promises Abraham in Gen 15 that his descendants will inherit the land of

51. See page 28 ff.

52. Weinfeld 1991 356–357.

Canaan, but only after four hundred years of slavery. This promise is fulfilled by Joseph's journey to Egypt and the subsequent enslavement of his descendants. The Israelites are liberated by Moses and receive the law, and the Pentateuch ends with the Israelites about to take possession of the land, as promised in Genesis. Loewenstamm notes that the Israelites' liberation from slavery depicts the moment when God became a god acting in history and ceased to be Israel's god "in potential alone."⁵³ The exodus story is thus "the basis of all biblical historiography."⁵⁴

The exodus story is central to Pentateuchal law. In the first commandment, God identifies himself as the one who brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt (Ex 20:2–3, Dt 5:6–7). The fourth commandment, according to Deuteronomy, prescribes Sabbath observance in remembrance of the Israelites' servitude in Egypt and liberation by God (Dt 5:15).⁵⁵ In addition to citing the exodus in the laws of Passover⁵⁶ and the festival of unleavened bread,⁵⁷ which figure in the exodus narrative, the Pentateuch also refers to the exodus in the laws of Sukkot⁵⁸ and First Fruits.⁵⁹ A large number of other laws refer

53. Loewenstamm 1992 24–25, 29.

54. Loewenstamm 1992 24–25.

55. Ex 20:8–11 links the Sabbath to the seven days of creation and does not mention the exodus.

56. Ex 12:27; Dt 16:1, 6.

57. Ex 12:17; 13:3, 8; 23:15, 34:18; Dt 16:3.

58. Lv 23:43.

59. Dt 26:8.

to the exodus from Egypt⁶⁰ and many specifically mention the Israelites' servitude.⁶¹ The Pentateuch often cites the exodus in exhortations to observe the law as a whole, including Moses's catchall answer to a child in Dt 6:21.⁶² Loewenstamm emphasizes that the exodus is the only event to have left an impression on Pentateuchal law and that this underscores its centrality to Israel's sacred historiography.⁶³

The exodus story was probably a primary component of Jewish self-identification in the first century not least because of the celebration of Passover, which was, Millar comments, "indisputabl[y]...the major national pilgrim festival" in first century Judea.⁶⁴ Josephus often notes that multitudes of Jews went to Jerusalem for Passover⁶⁵ and reports that a count of sacrificial victims established that nearly 2.7 million adult males celebrated Passover in Jerusalem during the time of Cestius Gallus in 65 CE.⁶⁶ Passover

60. In Exodus: tefillin (13:9, 16); not to oppress strangers (22:20, 23:9); in Leviticus: food laws (11:45); kindness to strangers (19:34); honest weights (19:36); not to profane the name of God (22:33); not to lend money at interest (25:38); Hebrew bondsman (25:42); manumission of Hebrew slaves in Jubilee year (25:55); in Numbers: fringes (15:41); in Deuteronomy: kindness to strangers (10:19); to worship god (10:22); to admit no Moabite or Ammonite to the kahal (23:5); skin afflictions (24:9). None of these laws refers to servitude in Egypt.

61. In Exodus: redemption of the first born (13:14); in Deuteronomy: wars of conquest (7:8); death for a prophet or dream-diviner who advocates worship of another god (13:6); death for a fellow Israelite who advocates worship of another god (13:11); manumission of a Hebrew slave in the Jubilee year (15:15); kindness to stranger, orphan, and widow (24:18); remains of olive and grape harvests left for stranger, orphan, and widow (Dt 24:22).

62. Lv 18:3; 26:45; Dt 4:20, 34, 37; 6:21; 8:14; 11:3, 10. On Dt 6:21, see page 26 above.

63. Loewenstamm 1992 30.

64. Millar 1990 361–362.

65. *War* 2.10, 224, 244; *Ant.* 17.213–214; 20.106.

66. *War* 6.420–425; cf. *War* 2.280 "not less than three million." Josephus reports the count of sacrificial victims before his description of the outbreak of the revolt, which he dates to the twelfth year of Nero (*War* 2.284, *Ant.* 20.257) or 66 CE, and after his introduction to the last Roman procurator of Judea, Gessius Florus (*War* 2.280), who assumed his position two years before the outbreak of the revolt (*Ant.* 20.257). This

plays an important role in the New Testament as the time of Jesus's crucifixion.⁶⁷ Luke reports that Jesus's parents went to Jerusalem for Passover every year.⁶⁸ Passover figures prominently in the Gospel of John, which Millar notes depicts "the real world of first-century Palestine" more accurately than the Synoptics.⁶⁹ In John, Jesus celebrates passover three times: twice in Jerusalem⁷⁰ and once in the Galilee.⁷¹ John, which is the only Jesus narrative to mention other festivals,⁷² also reports that many Jews went to Jerusalem for passover before the crucifixion⁷³ and explains that Galileans, as a group, celebrated Passover in Jerusalem.⁷⁴ Paul takes for granted that the audience of 1 Corinthians will understand an allusion to Passover,⁷⁵ perhaps because they would have known the story of Jesus or because some of the Jesus group in Corinth originally belonged to a synagogue.⁷⁶

The exodus was probably also an important component of personal ritual

suggests that the census took place in 65 CE, as Thackeray (cautiously) proposes (Thackeray 1927 433). Smallwood dates the count to 66 CE (Smallwood 1976 284–285).

67. Mt 26; Mk 14; Lk 22; Jn 18–19.

68. Lk 2.41.

69. Millar argues that "all four Gospels show every sign of deriving, directly or indirectly, from the real historical environment of Jesus' preaching" and that, of the four, John "brings us closest to the real world of first-century Palestine" (Millar 1990 359, 363).

70. Jn 2.13, 11.55.

71. Jn 6:4–5.

72. Sukkot: Jn 7:2; Dedication (Hanukah): Jn 10:22. An unidentified festival in Jn 5:1 is the setting for a debate about Sabbath observance, cf. Keener 2003 635.

73. This could also underscore the importance of the Passover at which Jesus was crucified.

74. Jn 4:45.

75. 1 Cor 5:6–8.

76. Cf. Acts 18:1–8 with Keener 2005 51.

practice. In his account of Moses's constitution, Josephus notes that Moses directed Jews to give thanks to God twice a day for their deliverance from Egypt (*Ant.* 4.212), which suggests that daily prayer mentioned the exodus.⁷⁷ *Antiquities* 4.123 reports that Moses also directed each Jew to inscribe on their door and display on their arms the greatest of the benefactions they received from God. Tefillin and mezuzot from the period probably mentioned the exodus: eighteen of the twenty-five tefillin and mezuzot from Qumran, which are probably the earliest physical evidence of Jewish ritual practice,⁷⁸ contain one or more biblical passages that refer to the exodus.⁷⁹

Josephus's Roman Audience

Evidence for the circumstances of composition, the sources he used, and the inscribed, implied, and actual audiences of his writings suggests that Josephus wrote each of his four works in Rome for the same primary Roman audience. Josephus probably envisioned Greeks and Jews as secondary audiences.⁸⁰

77. Feldman comments that this passage refers to the Shema, but Jonquiere disagrees (Feldman 2000 406 n. 439; Jonquiere 2007 46–47). The anonymous compiler of the Mishnah reports that “they mention the exodus from Egypt” at night [as well as during the day] (*m. Ber.* 1.5).

78. Cohn 2008 55. The “mezuzot” may be large tefillin (Cohn 2008 60–62).

79. See the table in Cohn 2008 65–66.

80. *Ant.* 4.197's reference to potential Jewish readers of Josephus's précis of Jewish law is probably a rhetorical gesture designed to emphasize its accuracy, as Mason also notes (Mason 2000 XIX). Polybius makes similar rhetorical use of potential Roman readers (Walbank 1972 3–4). Contrast Spilsbury 1998 21, who views *Ant.* 4.197 as a clear reference to Jewish readers.

When Josephus explains that he has cited Roman letters supporting Jewish rights in Greek cities in order “to remove the causes for hatred which have taken root in thoughtless persons among us as well as among them” (*Ant.* 16.175; Marcus & Wikgren, LCL), he may have Jewish readers in mind or may be striking a rhetorical pose, or possibly both.

Josephus went to Rome with Titus in the spring of 71 CE⁸¹ (*Life* 422–423) and witnessed Vespasian’s and Titus’s triumph in Rome (*War* 7.127–157) that June.⁸² Price notes that there is no evidence that Josephus ever left Rome,⁸³ and the scholarly consensus holds that he lived in Rome the rest of this life⁸⁴ and composed all of his works there.⁸⁵ Rajak suggests that Josephus might have been partly compelled to remain in Rome.⁸⁶ However, Josephus maintained land holdings in Judea (*Life* 422, 425, 429), and he may have visited them.⁸⁷

Josephus reports that he wrote *Jewish War* in Rome (*Ap.* 1.50) and that he consulted the *commentarii* of Vespasian (*Ap.* 1.56; *Life* 342, 358), which were probably kept in Rome. *Antiquities* cites decrees of the Senate and Julius Caesar (*Ant.* 14.189) and of the Senate and *imperatores* (*Ant.* 14.265) about Hyrcanus and “our nation,” copies of which are “even now” in the Capitol.⁸⁸ Josephus also cites several letters from important Romans to Greek cities confirming Jewish rights (*Ant.* 16.161, 164–178). Although Josephus might have consulted these decrees in an official archive, as Rajak notes, Pucci Ben Zeev suggests that this is unlikely and that Josephus might instead have obtained this evidence from Jewish archives either in the diaspora or in Rome.⁸⁹ Josephus probably based the detailed account of the assassination of Gaius and the accession of

81. Levick 1999 120.

82. Levick 1999 xxi, 93.

83. Price 2005 101.

84. Bilde 1988 21; Rajak 2002 1, 11.

85. Goodman 1999 50; Rajak 2002 7; Price 2005 101.

86. Rajak 2005 79.

87. Rajak 2002 xiv; Rajak 2005 88.

88. ἔτι νῦν, *Ant.* 14.188; cf. μέχρι νῦν, *Ant.* 14.266.

89. Rajak 1984 111; Pucci Ben Zeev 1998 388–408, esp. 398, 405.

Claudius in *Ant.* 19.1–273 on Roman literary sources, which were very likely located in Rome.⁹⁰

The inscribed audiences of Josephus’s works are quite similar; both *War* and *Antiquities* refer to an audience of “Greeks,” which could mean anyone able to read Greek prose (including Jews and non-Jews) or literal, non-Roman Greeks. *Jewish War*, however, specifically includes Romans as an audience. Josephus comments in the proem that he has composed *Jewish War* for those living under Roman rule (*War* 1.3) and to ensure that Greeks and those Romans who did not fight in the war did not remain ignorant of it (*War* 1.6). After noting that he will describe the Romans’ discipline during the war, Josephus reports that he will not try to hide his own misfortunes because he intends to address those who already know about them (*War* 1.22)—which could refer to Romans, or to a wider group.

Josephus comments in the proem that he has written *Antiquities* thinking that it will interest “all the Greeks” (*Ant.* 1.6) and notes that he only began writing once he recognized that Ptolemy II’s efforts to have the Law translated into Greek proved that “the Greeks” were interested in the Jews’ ancient history and political constitution (*Ant.* 1.9–10, cf. 1.5). In the work’s conclusion, Josephus observes that no one else, neither Jew nor gentile, could have published such an accurate historical account for “the Greeks” (*Ant.* 20.626). These comments need refer only to consumers of Greek prose. By contrast, when Josephus explains his citation in *Ant.* 16.163–173 of Roman decrees about Jewish rights in Greek cities of Asia Minor and in Cyrene by noting that his writings about “our affairs” are going mainly to “the Greeks” (*Ant.* 16.174), the

90. Goud argues that Josephus used three sources (Goud 1996). See the discussion in Chapter 6 B2 page 276 n. 264 below.

immediate context suggests that Josephus means literal Greeks.⁹¹ The remarks which follow about the Jews' devotion their ancestral customs, as sanctioned by the authorities, and the importance of justice, which Jewish law values highly, for Greeks and barbarians alike (*Ant.* 16.174, 176–177) may broaden the meaning of “Greeks” to include Romans, the authors of the documents which he cites.⁹²

Dedications to Epaphroditus in each work but *War* demonstrate that *Antiquities*, *Life*, and *Apion* share the same inscribed audience. Josephus notes in *Ant.* 1.8–9 that Epaphroditus encouraged him to write *Antiquities* and Josephus dedicates both *Antiquities* and *Life* to him in *Life* 430. *Against Apion* explicitly identifies no audience other than Epaphroditus, whom Josephus addresses at beginning of each book (*Ap.* 1.1; 2.1) and to whom he dedicates the entire work (*Ap.* 2.296).⁹³

Josephus's works often refer to each other and this suggests that Josephus wrote them all for the same audience.⁹⁴ *Antiquities* 20.266 refers forward to *Life* and the final lines of *Life* refers to all of *Antiquities* (*Life* 430), which implies that *Life* completes it. *Against Apion* begins by mentioning *Antiquities* (*Ap.* 1.1) and refers to it several times afterwards (*Ap.* 1.54, 127; 2.136, 287). *Antiquities*, *Life*, and *Against Apion* frequently

91. As Sterling also notes (Sterling 1992 303).

92. Rajak suggests that this implicitly refers back to the appeal of the Jews of Ionia to Agrippa in *Ant.* 16.23–67 (Rajak 1984 110).

93. Whether Epaphroditus existed or not, the dedications function rhetorically to unify the works and imply that Josephus expected or hoped that they would find the same audience (cf. “Theophilus,” Lk 1:3, Acts 1:1). If Epaphroditus was a real person, he may well have lived in Rome. On the identity of Epaphroditus, see Feldman 2000 5 n. 9; Mason 2001 173 n. 1780; Barclay 2007 3 n. 3.

94. As Mason also argues (Mason 1998 68; Mason 2003 563). The cross-references might simply express Josephus's hope that a reader of one work might become a reader of another.

refer to *War*.⁹⁵

Jewish War and *Antiquities* assume a non-Jewish readership in need of aids to comprehension. Both *War* and *Antiquities* describe Jewish festivals.⁹⁶ *Antiquities* explains why Hebrew names are not declined (*Ant.* 1.129) and provides their meaning (*Ant.* 1.33–34), converts Hebrew units of measure to Athenian units (*Ant.* 3.195, 3.234), and sometimes gives both Hebrew and “Macedonian” names of months (*Ant.* 1.80–81; 2.311; 12.248). *Antiquities* also includes explanations evidently directed to a Roman (or Italian) audience: it explains that a *seah* is 1.5 Italian *modii* (*Ant.* 9.85), comments that the bird Agrippa saw in a tree when he was fettered was a *bubo* (*Ant.* 18.195),⁹⁷ and notes that the Sicarii carried curved daggers which resembled Roman *sicae* (*Ant.* 20.186).⁹⁸

Omissions in *Antiquities* of prophecies that a reader might understand as references to the end of Roman power also suggest that Josephus had a Roman audience in mind. *Antiquities*’s account of Balaam omits his fourth prophecy, which predicts that Israel will defeat various peoples including the Kittim, whom LXX Dan 10:30 explicitly, and the Qumran peshers on Habakkuk and Nahum implicitly, identify with the Romans.⁹⁹

95. *Ant.* 1.4, 6, 203; 13.72, 173, 298; 18.11; 20.258; *Life* 27, 362, 412–413; *Ap* 1.47, 50–51, 53, 55.

96. *War* 2.42; 4.402; 5.99; *Ant.* 3.248, 252, 282; 17.213, 254.

97. *Contra* Sterling who argues that Josephus’s comment that Romans call the bird a *bubo* implies that the audience is *not* Roman (Sterling 1992 369).

98. Josephus’s explanation that Romans like chariot races (*Ant.* 19.24) is more odd, but, given that he may be using a Roman source, it might not prove that he is addressing non-Romans, *contra* Sterling 1992 369. Wiseman suggests that Josephus switches sources at this point (Wiseman 1991 49).

99. On Josephus’s condensed version of Balaam’s first three prophecies, see Feldman 2000 372 nn. 352, 355, 356, 358, 359; 373 n. 363. Dan 11:30 כְּתִימִים (MT), Ῥωμαῖοι (LXX). On the identification of the Kittim with Rome, see Vermes Schürer–Vermes I:241 n. 30; III.1:434–435, 434 n. 3, 435 n. 4.

Instead, *Ant.* 4.125 reports that Balaam foretold misfortunes for the most renowned kings and cities.¹⁰⁰ Josephus's account of Daniel's interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar explicitly declines to explain the meaning of the stone (*Ant.* 10.210), which Daniel predicts will crush the other kingdoms and establish a kingdom that will last forever (Dan 2:44–45).¹⁰¹ *Antiquities's* account of the last part of the book of Daniel omits Daniel's comments about the everlasting kingdom of the holy ones of the Most High (Dan 7:14, 8, 27) and the reference in Dan 11:30 to the Kittim (LXX: "the Romans").¹⁰²

Josephus claims that the actual audience for *Jewish War* included both Romans and Jews. In a passage aimed at pre-empting criticism of *War*, Josephus notes that he first presented copies of *War* to Vespasian and Titus (*Ap.* 1.51). In *Life*, Josephus comments in a digression on Justus (*Life* 354–367) that he gave copies of *War* to the *imperatores* (*Life* 361). Josephus also claims to have given copies of the work to "many Romans" who fought in the war and to have sold copies to "many of our own people" who knew Greek, including Agrippa (II?) and two other Herodians (*Ap.* 1.51).¹⁰³ The parallel in *Life* reports that Josephus gave copies of *War* to many others, some of whom, like King Agrippa and some of his relatives, happened to participate in the war (*Life* 362), which does not stress a wide Roman audience.¹⁰⁴

100. On *Ant.* 4.125 as substitute for Balaam's fourth prophecy, see Feldman 1998b 152–153; Feldman 1998c 118–119; Feldman 2000 375 nn. 379–380.

101. On Josephus's omission of the stone's meaning, see Feldman 1998b 649–651; Begg and Spilsbury 2005 284 n. 896.

102. On the omission of Dan 7 and 8–12, see Begg and Spilsbury 2005 306 n. 1110.

103. On the identities of Julius Archelaus, "Herod," and "Agrippa" (*Ap.* 1.51), see Barclay 2007 37 nn. 209–211.

104. As Barclay notes (Barclay 2007 37 n. 207).

Genres and Goals of Josephus's Works and this Study

Each of Josephus's four extant works belongs to a different genre; this study examines Josephus's comments about Jewish origins in three of them: *Jewish War*, *Antiquities*, and *Against Apion*. This study does not examine Josephus's *Life*, a brief account of his upbringing and his role in the revolt, since *Life* does not discuss Jewish origins. *Jewish War*, an account of a πόλεμος, is a war monograph.¹⁰⁵ Because *Jewish War*'s main concern is the revolt against Rome, Josephus might not have tailored his tangential remarks about Jewish origins in *War* to suit the goals of that work. Josephus evidently considered an ἀρχαιολογία, an account of a nation's origins and early history, to be a specific genre of ancient historiography.¹⁰⁶ He repeatedly emphasizes that *Antiquities* is an accurate account of the Jews' ancient history (ἀρχαιολογία)¹⁰⁷ based on their sacred writings,¹⁰⁸ which were a history of five thousand years.¹⁰⁹

Josephus probably considered the Jew's sacred writings to be the Hebrew and Greek versions of the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Writings, although scholars also suggest that he might also have used a targum in writing *Antiquities*.¹¹⁰ In a polemic against Greek historiography in *Against Apion*, Josephus comments that God provided

105. *War* as the account of a πόλεμος: *War* 1.1; 7.454; *Ant.* 1.4, 6, 203; 20.258; *Life* 27, 412–413; *Ap.* 1.55; as Ἰουδαϊκά: *Ant.* 13.72, 173, 298; as ἱστορία: *Life* 362, *Ap.* 1.53.

106. See *War* 1.17; Josephus appears to identify the works of Hieronymus the Egyptian (*Ant.* 1.93, 107) and Manetho, Berossus, Mochus, and Hestiaeus as ἀρχαιολογίαι (*Ant.* 1.107).

107. *Ant.* 1.5; 20.259, 267.

108. *Ant.* 1.5, 13, 17, 26; 10.218; 20.26. In *War*: 1.17, Josephus describes these writings as an ἀρχαιολογία, composed with great ἀκριβεία by Jews before him.

109. *Ant.* 1.13. Rajak notes that this was an impressive claim to make, as little else in the ancient world could claim such great antiquity (Rajak 1982 469).

110. For example, Attridge 1976 29–38; Feldman 1998b 23–25. On the composition of Josephus's canon, see the references in the following note.

the prophets with knowledge about the remote past (*Ap.* 1.37). He goes on to report that the Pentateuch was the work of Moses and that a succession of prophets wrote the thirteen books of history down to the time of “Artaxerxes” (*Ap.* 1.39–40).¹¹¹ In *Antiquities*, Josephus emphasizes Moses’s importance as a lawgiver and hints that most of *Antiquities* is based on Moses (*Ant.* 1.18). Josephus seems to assume that Moses wrote narrative as well as law (*Ant.* 3.73–73; 10.58).¹¹² *War* 1.17–19 implies that the accounts of the prophets end before Antiochus Epiphanes’s conquest of Jerusalem. Thus, Josephus probably thought that the Pentateuch and the succeeding books of the Bible were each written by one author. This study takes the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint as witnesses for the text Josephus had before him and examines possible textual variants, but it does not consider any earlier components from which they may have been composed or redacted.¹¹³

Josephus often refers to the *Antiquities* as a work of ἱστορία¹¹⁴ and frequently invokes the notion of ἀκρίβεια,¹¹⁵ noting, famously, that he neither adds nor omits any

111. Josephus thought Ahasuerus in the book of Esther was Artaxerxes and understood the “Artaxerxes” in Ezra-Nehemiah to be Xerxes (Thackeray 1926 179 n. a; Barclay 2007 30 n. 163). On the identity of the thirteen books, see Thackeray 1926 179 n. b; Barclay 2007 30 n. 165.

112. As Barclay also notes (Barclay 2007 29 n. 159).

113. In this study, the evidence used for the Masoretic Text is the text of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1977, 1997) based primarily on Codex Leningrad B19A from 1009 CE. The evidence used for the Septuagint is the Rahlfs-Hanhart 2006 edition, a reconstructed text based largely on 4th-5th century CE Christian manuscripts. Josephus may have had texts which differ from these editions. On the MT as a witness to the Hebrew Bible, see Tov 2001 22–77. For the textual history of the LXX, see Dines and Knibb 2004 81-108. For an excellent account of the Documentary Hypothesis and challenges to it, see Rofé 2009 177–213, 250–298.

114. *Ant.* 1.14; 8.56; 10.218; 14.2; 16.178; 18.27; 20.26, 224.

115. *Ant.* 1.17; 9.208; 20.260, 263.

details.¹¹⁶ The length and detail of the *Antiquities* and the vast amount of work that would have gone into writing it are *prima facie* evidence that Josephus took seriously his goal of relating the Jews' ancient history.¹¹⁷ *Antiquities* is a central text for this study.

Josephus identifies *Against Apion* as an ἀπολογία.¹¹⁸ Although it begins by claiming to reply to slanders about the Jews' antiquity,¹¹⁹ *Apion* specifies in its conclusion that one of its three main goals is refuting claims that the Jews were Egyptian by origin.¹²⁰ This study investigates in detail Josephus's careful refutation of these claims in *Apion*.

In order to evaluate the evidence in Josephus's works, it is necessary to establish the context in which he wrote by investigating traditions about Jewish origins that circulated among Jews and non-Jews from Josephus's time and earlier; this is the subject of Chapters 2 and 3. Chapters 4 and 6 investigate the hostility to Egyptians and to servile status in first century Rome, which might have influenced how Josephus chose to present Jewish origins. Chapters 5 and 7 explore Josephus's account of the Jews' national origins in Egypt, and their collective servitude and the slavery of individuals in the patriarchal period. Chapter 8 offers conclusions.

116. *Ant.* 1.17, 26; 4.196; 20.261.

117. Goodman 1994 338.

118. *Ap.* 2.147.

119. *Ap.* 1.2–5.

120. *Ap.* 2.289.

Chapter 2 - Jewish Origins in Jewish Sources

Introduction

Genesis and Exodus contain the foundational account of the Jews' national origins as slaves in Egypt in fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. For Josephus, this account is the work of Moses, who obtained an exact knowledge of ancient history directly from God, which Josephus promises to relate with accuracy, neither adding or omitting any details.¹ Yet, Josephus writes within a tradition that is not unitary: extra-biblical Jewish texts from before the second century CE preserve a range of alternative traditions about major figures in Genesis and about the Jews' national origins as slaves in Egypt. All of these traditions were available to Josephus to draw from in recounting the Jews' ancient history to his first century CE Roman audience.

This chapter examines the Genesis-Exodus account of the Jews' national and servile origins, and the servile status of individuals in the patriarchal period, and explores the reception of these and alternative traditions in the rest of the Hebrew Bible and in extra-biblical sources.

A. Egyptian Origins in Jewish Sources

Jewish sources frequently mention the Jews' national origins in Egypt, but the Egyptian tradition coexists with stories about patriarchal origins in Ur of the Chaldeans,

1. See Chapter 1 page 37 f.

Haran, and Canaan.

(1) Patriarchal and National Origins in Genesis and Exodus

The foundational account in Genesis describes God's prediction that Abraham's descendants will become a nation; Exodus depicts the prediction's fulfillment in Egypt.

(a) Patriarchal Origins in Genesis

The story of the Jews' national origins begins with God's promise in Gn 12 to make Abraham into a great nation, and Josephus often emphasizes that Abraham is the Jews' ancestor or founder (πρόγονος).² Yet, the Genesis account of Abraham's own origins is vague. Following the story of the Flood, Gn 10–11 lists Noah's descendants and traces the line of Shem down to the birth of Abraham and his brothers, Haran and Nahor (Gn 11.26). After Gn 11:28 notes that Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, אַרְרַךְ מוֹלְדוֹ, which could mean the land of his kin or of his birth,³ Gn 11:31 reports that Terah, Abraham's father, and his family departed Ur of the Chaldeans for Canaan, but settled instead in the land of Haran when they arrived there. From the account in Gn 11, one might infer that Abraham was also born in Chaldea, but this is not stated explicitly.

God speaks to Abraham for the first time in Gn 12:1 when he tells Abraham to leave אֶרֶץ אֲבִיךָ. Because Abraham has already settled in Haran (Gn 11:31) and Gn 12:4 emphasizes that Abraham departed from Haran, מֵאֶרֶץ הָרָאָה in Gn 12:1 suggests that Haran is Abraham's "land" and אֶרֶץ אֲבִיךָ might imply that Haran is the land of his birth or that God is directing Abraham to leave behind his kin.⁴ Subsequently, in

2. See Chapter 5 B2 page 199 ff.

3. Land of his birth: JPS translation, Speiser 1964 77; Alter 1996 49. Land of his kin: Cassuto 1964 274–275. Land of his kinsmen (or kin): Westermann 1984 132, 137; Homeland or land of his family: Wenham 1987 265.

4. Birthplace: Ramban; Speiser 1964 85–86; Hamilton 1990 369–371; Alter 1996 50.

Gn 15:7, God reminds Abraham that he brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans, which might be inconsistent with Gn 12:1; might imply that God spoke to Abraham twice, once in Chaldea (unreported in Genesis) and again in Haran;⁵ might mean that Gn 12:1–3 happened prior to Gn 11:31, before Abraham’s journey to Haran;⁶ or might mean that God foresaw that Terah was going to leave Chaldea for Haran and already intended to give Abraham the land of Canaan before he departed Chaldea.⁷

Later in Genesis, when Abraham sends his servant to find a wife for Isaac, he specifies that the servant should go אֶל-אֶרְצָי וְאֶל-מִלְכָּתַי (Gn 24:4) and then notes that that God had taken him from his father’s house and מֵאֶרֶץ מִלְכָּתַי (Gn 24:7). Instead of going to Chaldea or Haran, however, the servant goes to Aram-naharayim (Gn 24:10).

Subsequent references to the origins of Rebekah, Isaac’s wife, connect Abraham’s land and origins to Paddan-aram, which it also calls Haran. At the beginning of the story of Isaac, Gn 24:19 notes that his wife was the daughter of Bethuel, whom it describes as an Aramean from Paddan-aram (Gn 25:20). In Gn 27, fearing Esau’s wrath, Rebekah directs Jacob to flee to her brother in Haran (Gn 27:43). Once Rebekah has disingenuously convinced Isaac that Jacob should not marry a Hittite woman (Gn 27:46), Isaac sends Jacob to Bethuel in Paddan-aram (Gn 28:2). Genesis 28:5 and 6 refer to

Kin: Rashi; Skinner 1930 243; Cassuto 1964 311–312; Westermann 1986 144; Sarna 2001 88; Kugel 2012 90–91.

5. So Witherington on Acts 7:4 (Witherington III 1998 266).

6. According R Nehemiah in (*Gen. Rab.* 39.8), the second לָךְ in God’s instruction to Abraham in Gn12:1 (לָךְ-לָךְ) refers to the covenant in Gn 15:7, which must have been made before Abraham’s departure for Haran. Freedman argues that the dating of the exodus in Ex 12:41 implies that Abraham must have been 70 in Gn 15:7, which must therefore have taken place before Abraham’s departure from Haran (Freedman 1939, 316 n. 5). (Gn 12:4 reports that Abraham was 75 when he left Haran.)

7. Ramban on Gn 11:28, 12:1, 15:7.

Jacob's destination as Paddan-aram, but Gn 28:10 describes it as Haran.

Taking the references from Gen 11–28 together, Gn 15:7 aside, the most reasonable conclusion is that Abraham was born in Haran, which was also known as Aram-naharayim and Paddan-aram.⁸

Genesis also inconsistently describes Canaan as the land of Jacob and Joseph's fathers, but suggests that Abraham and Isaac were aliens in Canaan. In Gn 29–30, Jacob asks Laban's permission to return to his place and land (Gn 30:25),⁹ referring, perhaps, to Beersheba, from which he had departed for Haran (Gn 28:10). God subsequently tells Jacob to return אֶל-אֲרָץ אֲבוֹתָיָהּ, to the land of his *fathers* (Gn 31:3), plural. Jacob clearly intends to return to Canaan, where his father Isaac was born.¹⁰ Because Abraham was not born in Canaan, the plural אֲבוֹתָיָהּ is inconsistent with Gn 11–28.

Jacob/Israel's deathbed prediction to Joseph suggests that Canaan is the ancestral land of all of Jacob's offspring. After blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, Israel addresses Joseph directly, and tells him that "God will be with you (plural) and will bring you (plural) back to the land of your fathers" (Gn 48:21), meaning Canaan. The next verse switches to the singular, when Israel assigns to Joseph what he took from the Amorites (Gn 48:22). The plural "you" in Gn 48:21 thus seems to refer to all of Israel's descendants. Since both Isaac and Jacob/Israel were born in Canaan,¹¹ Israel's comment

8. Speiser comments that Haran was the home of the Patriarchs, not Ur (Speiser 1964 80). Ramban on Gn 11:28 holds that Abraham was born in Haran. Rashbam on Dt 26:5, אֲרָמִי אֲבִד אָבִי, notes that Abraham was an exile from Aram, and cites Gn 12:1 as evidence.

9. אֶל-מְקוֹמִי וְלְאֲרָצִי.

10. Sarah gives birth to Isaac (Gn 21:2) after Abraham settles in Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur, in the Negev (Gn 20:1).

11. Genesis 20–21 suggests that Isaac was born in Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur (Gn 20:1, 21:2); see the previous note. Genesis 25 indicates that Jacob was born in Beer-

might be true in a narrow sense. However “fathers” might also include Abraham or refer to an “ancestral land” more generally. By contrast, earlier passages make clear that Abraham and Isaac were aliens in Canaan. In Gn 17:8, God assigns Abraham the land in which he lives as an alien (מְגוֹר) and Abraham describes himself as an alien in Hebron (Gn 23:4). The narrative refers to Hebron as a place where both Abraham and Isaac live as aliens (Gn 35:27), and describes Canaan as the place where Isaac lived as an alien (Gn 37:1).

Genesis also highlights that Jacob’s family are not Egyptians. When Joseph’s brothers have lunch at Joseph’s house on their second visit to Egypt, the narrator specifies that the Hebrews and Egyptians dined apart, because it would have been an abomination for the Egyptians to dine with the Hebrews (Gn 43:32).¹² Once Jacob and his family have come to settle in Egypt, Jacob exhorts his brothers to tell Pharaoh that they are shepherds when he asks about their occupation (Gn 46:33–34) so that they can settle in Goshen. Jacob explains that all shepherds are an abomination to Egyptians (Gn 46:34).¹³

lahai-roi, between Kadesh and Bered (Gn 16:14; Gn 25:11, 25:21, 26).

12. Gunkel and Westermann comment that this superfluous detail is included to entertain the reader/listener (Gunkel 1997 431; Westermann 1987 126).

13. Commentators variously remark that Joseph’s explanation is insufficient (Dillmann 1897 II:422); that the point of the story is to show how Joseph contrived to have his family settle near Egypt’s borders (Gunkel 1997 440; Wenham 2000 445) so they could leave easily during the exodus (Gunkel 1997 440); that Joseph is subtly warning his brothers not to offend the Egyptians (Westermann 1987 168); that Joseph is deliberately directing them to lie (Gunkel 1997 440; Sarna 2001 318) to hide that they are also traders (Sarna 2001 318). Contrary to Jacob’s claim in Gn 46:34, Diodorus Siculus lists herdsmen (βομῆς) as one of three categories of citizen in Egypt (1.74).

(b) Foreshadowing National Origins in Genesis

The promise of future nationhood is a central theme of the Genesis narrative, and God specifies in Gn 46 that Jacob will become a nation in Egypt. The first of God's seven promises to Abraham in Gn 12 is to make him into a great nation, גוי גדול (Gn 12:2). Scholars have highlighted the use of גוי instead of עם in Gn 12:1, commenting that עם refers to kinship, but גוי is a political concept which includes territory and government.¹⁴ With one exception, the subsequent narrative emphasizes God's promise of nationhood to Abraham and his descendants using גוי.¹⁵ When introducing the covenant of circumcision, God thrice promises to make Abraham into many nations, קמון גוים (Gn 17:4–6) and adds that Sarah will become nations, גוים (Gn 17:16). Later, God decides not to hide his judgement of Sodom from Abraham because he will become a “large and powerful nation,” גוי גדול וְעָצוּם (Gn 18:18). In Gn 25, God tells Rebekah that she is carrying two nations (שְׁנֵי גֵיִם, Gn 25:23). When Jacob returns to Bethel, site of his dream in Gn 28, God renames him Israel (Gn 35:10) and promises that “a nation and an assembly of nations,” גוי וקהל גוים will come from him (Gn 35:11). Echoing his prediction to Abraham in Gn 15 and foreshadowing the Exodus story, God assuages Jacob's fears of going to Egypt by promising to make him into a great nation there, גוי גדול (Gn 46:3).

(c) National Origins in Exodus

The Book of Exodus describes describe the transformation of the Israelites from a clan into a nation in Egypt, but also suggests that the Israelites mixed with the natives and developed a taste for Egyptian practices. These aspects of the account would later

14. Speiser 1960; Speiser 1964 86; Cody 1964; Westermann 1986 149–150; Hamilton 1990 371–372.

15. The exception is Gn 48:4, קהל עמים, cf. Gn 35:11, קהל גוים.

trouble Josephus.

The first ten verses of Exodus describe how Israel changes from an extended family into a nation, which acts as a collective in the subsequent narrative. Exodus begins by detailing the members of *בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* who accompanied Jacob to Egypt with their households (Ex 1:1). The listing of names in Ex 1:2–5 suggests that *בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* refers literally to Jacob’s sons.¹⁶ A Qumran fragment of the book of Exodus, 4QExod b (4Q13), emphasizes this by describing Jacob as “their father.”¹⁷ After Ex 1:6 notes the death of Joseph, his brothers, and that whole generation, Ex 1:7 reports that *בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* grew and filled the land, which, despite the plural verbs, suggests that Jacob’s descendants became a collective.¹⁸ When, in Ex 1:9, the new Pharaoh warns the Egyptians about the size and strength of the Jews, he describes them as a collective: *עַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*. Pharaoh’s direct speech in Ex 1:10 and the description of the Jews’ oppression in Ex 1:11–12 refers back to *עַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* with a series of singular verbs and pronouns, which underscores that the Israelites are no longer merely a collection of individuals, as in Genesis, but have a corporate identity.¹⁹

The people as a collective are a principal character in the subsequent narrative, both from the external points of view of the narrator and characters in the story, including God and Moses, and from the internal point of view of the people themselves. In Ex 2, the cries of the Israelites (*בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*) reach God, who remembers his covenant

16. *Contra* Sarna 1991 4.

17. 4QExod b: אביהם; cf LXX: ὁ πατήρ αὐτῶν, which Wevers takes literally (Wevers 1990 1). Propp suggests that אביהם fell out of the MT tradition (Propp 1999 120).

18. So Noth 1962 20 and Rendtorff 1986 139, neither of whom discuss the plural verbs in v. 7.

19. Propp notes the “collective singular” (Propp 1999 123).

(Ex 2:23–25). When Moses returns from Midian and performs signs, the people believe in him (וַיִּאֱמָנוּ הָעָם, Ex 4:31). Pharaoh orders the Israelites to make bricks without straw and the people scatter to look for straw (וַיִּפְּצוּ הָעָם, Ex 5:12). Before the tenth plague, Moses instructs the people to slaughter lambs and to keep this practice as an institution for all time; the people then bow and prostrate themselves (וַיִּקְדוּ הָעָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ, Ex 12:27). At the burning bush, God tells Moses that he has observed the plight of his people (עָמִי, Ex 3:7) and heard the cry of the Israelites (בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, Ex 3:9). As a consequence, God tells Moses to free his people, the Israelites (עָמִי בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, Ex 3:10). After the golden calf episode, God directs Moses to tell the Israelites (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) “You are a stiff-necked people (עַם)” (Ex 33:5). Upon returning from Mt. Sinai because of the golden calf, Moses asks Aaron what the people (הָעָם) had done to him, and Aaron replies that the people (הָעָם) are bent on evil (Ex 32:21–22).

When the people speak in Exodus, they do so in first person plural verbs, which suggests that they have a collective self-identification. Trapped between the Egyptian army and the Red Sea, the people complain “Is this not the very thing we told (דַּבַּרְנוּ) you...saying, ‘Let us be, and we will serve (נַעֲבֹדָה) the Egyptians[.]’” (Ex 14:12). Later, suffering from thirst in the desert, they ask Moses “What shall we drink? (מַה-נִּשְׁתֶּה)” (Ex 15:24). When Moses is away on Mt. Sinai, the people ask Aaron to make a golden calf because “we do not know (לֹא יָדַעְנוּ) what has happened to him [Moses]” (Ex 32:1). The people do not always complain; when promising their obedience to God, they also speak in the first person: “All that the Lord has spoken we will do! (נַעֲשֶׂה)” (Ex 19:8).²⁰

20. In Ex 20:16, the people also promise to obey Moses and fear that they will die if God speaks to them (נִשְׁמָעָה...פֶּן-נָמוּת).

Although the exodus story presupposes that the Israelites were distinct from the Egyptians, a few passages are ambiguous or hint at the need to clarify that the Jews were not Egyptians. Houtman comments that Ex 1:1 includes two instances of the verb בוא to emphasize that the Hebrews came to Egypt from elsewhere.²¹ The narrative also evinces a particular concern with Moses's identity. When Pharaoh's daughter finds Moses in the basket, she immediately concludes, without further explanation, that he must be a Hebrew child (Ex 2:6).²² After Moses is grown, he comes across an Egyptian beating a Hebrew and kills the Egyptian. To emphasize that Moses is not an Egyptian, the MT reports that Moses had gone out to "his brothers" and clarifies that the Hebrew was "one of his brothers" (Ex 2:11), by adding מֵאֶחָיו in apposition to אִישׁ-עִבְרָי. Moses then flees to Midian and has a son with Zipporah, whom he names Gershom, which Ex 2:22 explains means "I have been an alien (גֵּר הֵיְיָתִי) in a foreign land." As an etymology of גֵּרֹשָׁם and using a past tense verb, this suggests that Moses was an alien in Egypt, although it might refer to Midian or be deliberately ambiguous.²³ Exodus 18:3 repeats this etymology when reporting Jethro's journey to meet Moses in the wilderness. Despite these passages, which seem intended to show that Moses was not Egyptian, the incident at the well in Midian in Ex 2 suggests that Moses was taken for an Egyptian in a chance encounter. After Moses drives off the shepherds who were harassing Reuel's daughters and waters

21. Houtman 1993 221.

22. Pharaoh had already ordered his people to throw every male newborn Hebrew into the Nile (Ex 1:22). Propp argues that any male baby found floating in a basket would, perforce, be a Hebrew (Propp 1999 151).

23. Sarna and Durham conclude the "foreign land" must be Egypt. (Sarna 1991 13; Durham 1987 23–24). Propp notes that the "foreign land" could also be Midian or the text could be ambiguous (Propp 1999 174).

their flock (Ex 2:16–17), they tell their father “an Egyptian” rescued them (Ex 2:19). The daughters’ conclusion seems to rest either on Moses’s appearance or on something omitted in the account.²⁴

The Exodus narrative generally stresses the Israelites’ distinctiveness. In Ex 1, the new king who arises after Joseph’s death, addresses “his people” and warns of the danger “the Israelite people” pose to “us,” the Egyptians (Ex 1:9). When Pharaoh castigates the midwives who have not followed his orders to kill all male newborn Israelites, the midwives explain that “the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women” (Ex 1:19). After the fourth plague, God directs Moses and Aaron to sacrifice “to your God” in Egypt (Ex 8:21), but Moses replies that this would be a mistake because their sacrifices are an abomination to the Egyptians (Ex 8:22). Exodus also twice notes that the Israelites were aliens in Egypt; in the legal passage that follows the giving of the Ten Commandments, God tells Moses to instruct the Israelites not to wrong or oppress a stranger because the Israelites were aliens in Egypt (Ex 22:20; 23:9).

Other passages suggest that the Israelites lived closely with Egyptians and may have bred with them. At the burning bush, God tells Moses that each Israelite woman will borrow valuables from her Egyptian neighbor and the Egyptian who lives in her house (Ex 3:22), which may suggest that the Israelites and Egyptians lived together.²⁵

24. *Exod. Rab.* I 32, from the 10th to 12th century CE, and Sarna comment that Moses’s clothing, and Bechor Shor that Moses’s clothing and language, suggested that he was Egyptian (Sarna 1991 12; on the dating of *Exod. Rab.* see Strack and Stemberger 1991 309). Durham strongly opposes this view (Durham 1987 23). Ralbag notes that they may have questioned him. Ex 2:17 reports only Moses’s actions.

25. As Daube observes, noting that this may refer to Egyptian concubines of the Israelites. (Daube 1963 53–54). Before the tenth plague, God tells Moses to direct each man and woman among the people to borrow items from their neighbors (Ex 11:2).

When the Israelites have departed Egypt and travelled from Raamses to Succoth, Ex 12:38 notes that an עַרְבֵי רַב (“a mixed multitude,” JPS; “many foreigners,” Propp), presumably not Israelites, had gone out of Egypt with them. The provisions for the foreigner or stranger in the laws of the passover offering which follow (Ex 12.43–49), may suggest a sensitivity to the presence of non-Israelites in the group that departed Egypt.²⁶

The golden calf episode in Ex 32 may hint at a preference for Egyptian cultic practice.²⁷ In Ex 24, Moses leaves the people behind and ascends Mt Sinai, at God’s command, to receive tablets of the law (Ex 24:12–15), and is away for forty days and nights (Ex 24:18). Although the people see God’s presence on the top of the mountain (Ex 24:17) and despite the prohibition against making or worshiping images (Ex 20:3–6), when the people notice that Moses is slow to return from the mountain, they ask Aaron to make them gods who can go before them (Ex 32.1). In response to this general request for “gods,” Aaron fashions a metal bull-calf or young bull from gold collected from the people (Ex 32:4).²⁸ The people then announce “these are your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of...Egypt” (Ex 32:4).²⁹ Aaron builds an altar in front of the bull-calf and declares a festival of the Lord for the following day (Ex 32:5), which the people

26. See Propp 1999 173, 414–415, 419–420. The laws of the Passover offering could also indicate that non-Jews were part of the community at the time Ex 12:43–49 was composed.

27. Some scholars have argued that Ex 32 post-dates and is a condemnation of Jeroboam’s calves, described in I Kgs 12:25–33 (Noth 1962 246; Childs 1974 559–560). Houtman doubts and Durham rejects this link (Houtman 1999 625–625; Durham 1987 420–421). For a detailed discussion of the issues, see Propp 2006 574–578; for a review of scholarship, see Houtman 1999 620–626.

28. Sarna comments that an עֵגֶל is a young ox or bull (Sarna 1991 203) and that this explains why Ps 106:19–20 has both עֵגֶל and שׂוֹר, ox. See A2b below.

29. “Gods” plural although Aaron has made a single calf.

duly celebrate with offerings, presumably to the bull-calf image, along with feasting and dancing (Ex 32:6).

Given that the Israelites have lived in Egypt for more than 400 years, a natural interpretation of the story is that the bull-calf represents Apis, and the people are engaging in a well-known Egyptian practice: animal worship.³⁰ Although Ex 32:4 and Aaron's dissembling in Ex 32:34 suggest that Aaron made the calf, God tells Moses that the people made the calf (Ex 32:8). MT Ex 32:35 confusingly tries to straddle both options.³¹ Thus, for Aaron, the people, or both, the natural choice for "gods" was an image of a bull-calf.³²

(2) Patriarchal and National Origins in the Rest of the Hebrew Bible

Biblical books outside of Genesis-Exodus often refer to the Jews' national origins in Egypt, but rarely concern themselves with the origins of Abraham.

(a) Patriarchal Origins

Only three passages outside of Genesis refer to Abraham's origins; one links Abraham with Ur of the Chaldeans and two with Mesopotamia. In Neh 9, after the Israelites have spent a half-day reading the Torah and confessing their sins (Neh 9.2–3),

30. Houtman notes that this was the standard interpretation until the 19th century, when scholars sought to place Ex 32 in a wider ancient Near Eastern context (Houtman 1999 626–627; see also Childs 1974 565–566). Writing in the late 19th century, Murphy notes only the Apis interpretation (Murphy 1881 212). Some modern scholarship recognizes both possibilities (Durham 1987 420–421).

31. God strikes the people with a plague "because they had made the bull-calf which Aaron had made" (עַל אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֶת-הָעֵגֶל, אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱהֲרֹן).

32. Rashi attributes the making of the calf and declaration "*your* gods" to the עַרְבֵי רַב from Ex 12:38. However, God's comment in Ex 32:8 recognizes no distinction between the עַרְבֵי רַב and the people. Block observes that the golden calf incident supports Ezekiel's claim (Ezek 20:5–7) that the Israelites had worshipped Egyptian gods before the exodus (Block 1997 628). On Ezek 20, see section A2b page 59 f.

the Levites deliver a long speech which begins with the creation and then notes that God is one who chose Abraham and led him out of Ur of the Chaldeans (Neh 9:7). This allusion to Gen 15:7 is the only mention of Ur of the Chaldeans outside of Genesis, and does not claim that Chaldea was Abraham’s native land.³³ By contrast, elsewhere and at a later time, the Chaldeans are portrayed as antagonists of the Jews, without reference to Abraham’s origins; 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles report the Chaldeans’ capture and occupation of Jerusalem.³⁴ Chaldeans are Daniels’ resentful competitors in interpreting Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams throughout the book of Daniel.³⁵

The instructions in Dt 26 for celebrating the festival of first fruits direct each Israelite to recite a précis of Israel’s history, which begins “a wandering Aramean was my father” (אֲרָמִי אֲבִי אָבִי; Dt 26:5, JPS).³⁶ The next phrase, “he went down into Egypt,” implies that “my father” refers to Jacob, although Jacob seems to have been born in Beer-lahai-roi, between Kadesh and Bered, according to Gn 25, and not in Aram.³⁷ Given that Abraham’s family probably originated in Aram-naharayim / Paddan-aram, as Gen 24–25 suggests, אֲרָמִי...אֲבִי probably refers more broadly to the Mesopotamian origins of the Israelites’ forefathers.³⁸

33. The four references to Ur of the Chaldeans in the Hebrew Bible are Gen 11:28, 31, 15:7, and Neh 9:7.

34. Capture of Jerusalem: 2 Kg 25:4–13, 2 Chr 36:17; occupation of Jerusalem: 2 Kg 25:24–26.

35. See Dan 3:8, 5:7, and *passim*.

36. Tigay comments that the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain (Tigay 2003 241). Targum Onkelos renders the phrase “Laban the Aramean sought to destroy my father” (לְבָן אֲרָמִי מְאַדָּה דְּעָא לְאוּבְדָא יִתְ אֲבִי), and Rashi offers the same explanation.

37. Isaac settles in Beer-lahai-roi (Gn 25:11); Rebekah conceives (Gn 25:21); Jacob born (Gn 25:26). Gn 16:14 places Beer-lahai-roi between Kadesh and Bered. See page 44 n. 11 above.

38. As Tigay notes (Tigay 2003 241). Rashbam interprets אֲרָמִי...אֲבִי as a reference to

Joshua begins his farewell speech to the Israelites by noting that in olden times their forefathers, specifically Terah, lived “beyond the river,” which refers to Mesopotamia (Josh 24:2).³⁹ Joshua then specifies that God took Abraham from “beyond the river” and led him to Canaan (Josh 2:3). Thus, although the Hebrew Bible, outside the Pentateuch, is not overly concerned with Abraham’s origins, two of the three references place his origins in Mesopotamia. Similarly, only four passages outside the Pentateuch specify that the Jews are the descendants of Abraham (זָרַע אַבְרָהָם), using a phrase not found in the Pentateuch.⁴⁰

(b) National Origins

In keeping with the foundational account in Exodus, some Pentateuchal passages from outside Genesis-Exodus note that the Israelites became a nation in Egypt or emphasize that the Israelites and Egyptians were separate peoples. In Dt 4, Moses rhetorically asks whether a god had ever tried to remove a nation (גוי) from the midst of another one (Dt 4:34). The recitation prescribed for the celebration of the festival of first fruits has each Israelite declare “my father went...to Egypt with meager numbers...but there...became a very populous nation (גוי)” (Dt 26:5; JPS), which underscores the importance given to each individual’s self-identification with the nation’s collective origins.

Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy each note that the Israelites were

Abraham. Ibn Ezra comments that the verse refers to Jacob, whom it calls an Aramean. See the discussion of Gen 24–25 in section A1a page 43.

39. “The river” is the Euphrates, as Josh 1:4 makes clear; cf. Dt 11:24. Joshua names Terah explicitly to avoid including Abraham in the comment that their forefathers worshipped idols.

40. Is 41:8; Jer 33:26; Ps 105:6; 2 Chr 20:7.

strangers in Egypt, not Egyptians. Epitomes of Israelite history in Numbers and Deuteronomy emphasize that the Israelites went to Egypt from outside and lived there as aliens. In Num 20, Moses sends messengers to ask the king of Edom permission to cross his territory, and they tell the king that their ancestors went down to Egypt and dwelt there a long time (Nu 20:15). The recitation prescribed for the celebration of first fruits in Dt 26 uses וַיִּגְר to underscore that the Israelites were aliens in Egypt. Similarly, Lev 19:34 and Dt 10:19 justify the laws on treating strangers well by noting that the Israelites were aliens (גֵּרִים) in Egypt (Lv 19:34, Dt 10:9). After specifying that no *mamzer*, person with crushed testes, Ammonite, or Moabite shall be admitted to the assembly of the Lord (Dt 23:2–4), Moses adds that the Israelites should not abhor an Egyptian because “you were a stranger (גֵּר) in his land” (Dt 23:8).

Yet, some parts of the Pentateuch outside of Genesis-Exodus suggest that the Israelites mixed with the Egyptians. Although Moses delivers his speech in Deuteronomy a generation after the exodus, he begins by recalling what God had said to them just before they set out from Horeb (Dt 1:16). Moses notes that he had instructed their judges to rule justly between a kinsman and a stranger (גֵּר). In Ex 33, God commands the Israelites to depart from Horeb immediately after the golden calf incident (Ex 33:1, 6).⁴¹ Reading these verses together suggests that the group at Sinai, soon after the departure from Egypt, was mixture of Israelites and aliens; Deuteronomy 1 may thus echo Ex 12:38.

In Numbers, after the cloud lifts from the tabernacle and the Israelites set out from the wilderness of Sinai (Nu 10:11–12), the אֲרָבָה, bored by a diet of manna, weep

41. As Tigay comments (Tigay 2003 8).

and yearn for the food that they used to eat in Egypt (Nu 11:4–6). Both the term **רְסָסִים**, derived from the root **רסא** which can mean “to gather,” and Nu 11:4, which notes that “also the Israelites” (**גַּם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**) sat down and wept suggests the **רְסָסִים** were not Israelites. Several commentators, medieval and modern, understand the **רְסָסִים** to be the group of foreigners in Ex 12.38 that departed Egypt with the Israelites.⁴² Although Nu 11:4 distinguishes the **רְסָסִים** from the Israelites, their complaining together about the merits of the food in Egypt versus manna suggests that they shared basic tastes.

Passages in the Hebrew Bible from outside Exodus treat the golden calf episode in various ways: some report it in a straightforward manner, while others modify or omit it. In their epitome of Israelite history in Neh 9, the Levites note that the Israelites made a metal calf (**עֲגֹל מַסְכָּה**) and declared it was the god that had brought them out of Egypt (Neh 9:18), using the same language as in Ex 32. A couplet in Ps 106’s historical summary reports that the Israelites made a bull-calf (**עֲגֹל**) at Horeb and exchanged their glory for an image of a bull (**שׂוֹר**, Ps 106:19–20). In Dt 9, Moses reminds the people that, when he had received the stone tablets, God told him that the Israelites had made a metal casting (**מַסְכָּה**, Dt 9:12). In Ex 32:8, God refers specifically to a metal calf (**עֲגֹל מַסְכָּה**), which is how Ex 32 constantly describes the object; it is unclear why Moses does not mention a calf in Dt 9.

The book of Numbers may omit mention of the golden calf when it describes the duties of the Levites, but also suggests that the God of the Exodus resembled an ox. In

42. Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Milgrom 1990 83, Propp 1999 736. Durham argues against this identification (Durham 1987 127). Levine comments that the **רְסָסִים** were non-Israelites (Levine 1993 321).

Nu 3, following a specific reference to Mount Sinai (Nu 3:1), God describes the duties of the Levites (Nu 3:5–10) and designates them as substitutes for the first-born of Israel, whom God had consecrated to himself at the tenth plague in Egypt (Nu 3:11–13).⁴³ Nu 3:1–13 thus seems to refer back to the Levites’ zeal during the golden calf incident and Moses’s call immediately afterwards for them to dedicate themselves to God (Ex 32:25–29).⁴⁴ Numbers 3 may therefore deliberately omit mention of the golden calf when it describes the Levites’ special status. By contrast, Balaam twice describes the God who freed the Israelites from Egypt as כְּתוֹעֵפֹת רְאָם, “like the horns of an ox,” (Nu 23:22, 24:8; JPS) which suggests, according to Propp, that the God of the exodus resembled a bull.⁴⁵

The Septuagint version of a passage in the book of Jeremiah, which Josephus would have regarded as the accurate record of a prophet,⁴⁶ mentions Apis and describes it as ὁ μῶσχος, which is the term Ex 32 uses to describe the golden calf and the term Herodotus uses to describe Apis.⁴⁷ This passage may also represent an original version of the Hebrew text. When predicting that God will deliver Egypt into Nebuchadnezzar’s hands (Jer 46:2–28), Jeremiah asks מַדּוּעַ נִקְטַח אַבְיָרֶיךָ לֹא עָמְדוּ כִּי יְהוָה הִדְפוּ (“Why are your stalwarts swept away? They did not stand firm, For the LORD thrust them down,” Jer 46:15; JPS) understanding אַבְיָרֶיךָ “your mighty ones” as the singular subject of נִקְטַח, a

43. Milgrom argues that Nu 3:1–13 refers to events at Mount Sinai because Nu 1:1 and 3:14 both refer to the wilderness of Sinai (Milgrom 1990 15).

44. Ibn Ezra understands Nu 3:1 to refer the golden calf incident. Rashi on Nu 3:12 notes that the first-born had performed sacrifices but that they lost this privilege to the Levites when the first-born sinned with the golden calf.

45. Propp 1999 552. Milgrom and Wevers comment that the meaning of תוֹעֵפֹת is obscure (Milgrom 1990 200; Wevers 1998 396).

46. *Ap.* 1.29, 40. On Josephus’s views of the authorship of the Bible, see Ch 1 page 37 f.

47. Hdt. 3.28.2, cf. 2.41.1.

verb attested in only one other passage, and עָמַד.⁴⁸ Septuagint Jer 26:15 (= MT Jer 46:15) renders this verse διὰ τί ἔφυγεν ὁ Ἄπις; ὁ μόσχος [ὁ ἐκλεκτός] σου οὐκ ἔμεινεν, ὅτι κύριος παρέλυσεν αὐτόν (“Why has Apis fled? Your [choice] bull calf did not remain, because the Lord paralyzed him.” [NETS]).⁴⁹ The phrase διὰ τί ἔφυγεν ὁ Ἄπις makes sense as a rendering of מדוע נס חף אביריך, reading חף נס as two words. The word חף appears in inscriptions as the Aramaic term for Apis.⁵⁰ Lexical and contextual reasons suggest that the LXX accurately reflects the original Hebrew. Using ὁ μόσχος...σου for אַבְיִרְיָךְ makes sense contextually as an appositive for Apis and supports the reading נס חף.⁵¹ Jeremiah 46:2–28 twice mentions Memphis, home of the Apis bull.⁵² Septuagint Jer 26 transliterates two Hebrew phrases (Jer 46:17, 18), which suggests that the translator was trying to stay close to the Hebrew, but that he may have found some phrases to be obscure. This is consistent with the scholarly consensus that LXX Jeremiah probably derives from an older, shorter form of the Hebrew and that its translator closely follows the source text.⁵³ Reading חף נס as two words also makes MT Jer 46:15 into a tricolon and improves the parallelism: מדוע נס חף / אביריך לא עמד / כי יהוה הדפו.

Some passages outside Genesis-Exodus, which do not refer to the golden calf, suggest that the Israelites practiced idolatry in Egypt. Using non-specific language, Lev

48. The Nifal form חָפַד occurs only here. Prov 28:3 has the Qal participle חָפֵד.

49. ὁ ἐκλεκτός may be a *lectio duplex* for אַבְיִרְיָךְ. See Soderlund 1985 269 n. 29; McKane 1996 1127.

50. See *CIS* II no. 123 (cf. Cooke 1903 no. 72), a libation bowl found in the ruins of the Serapeum at Memphis, and *CIS* II no. 142, a burial stele.

51. Soderlund 1985 269 n. 29

52. Str. 17.1.31; Pliny *HN* 8.184-186.

53. Shead 2015 479–480, 483.

18:3 directs the Israelites not to follow the practices of the land of Egypt, where they had dwelt, or of the land of Canaan. Lev 18:3 concludes with a prescription not to follow “their laws.” Because the rest of Lev 18 concerns prohibited sexual relationships with family members, Milgrom argues that both Egyptian practices and “their laws” must refer to the Egyptian practice of consanguineous marriage and, generally, to Egyptian licentiousness.⁵⁴ Levine, however, finds the reference to Egyptian practices puzzling, given the lack of evidence of widespread incest in Egypt or Canaan, but comments that injunctions in the Hebrew Bible against following the laws of other nations “refer primarily to idolatry.”⁵⁵ Hartley comments that Lev 18:3 refers both to cultic practices and intra-family relationships.⁵⁶

Two passages in the Prophets specifically accuse the Israelites of practicing idolatry in Egypt. Joshua begins his farewell speech by noting that the Israelites’ fathers lived beyond the river and worshipped foreign gods (Josh 24:2). After reviewing Israelite history, Joshua concludes the first part of his speech by directing the Israelites to put away “the gods” that their fathers had worshipped beyond the river and *in Egypt* (Josh 24:14, emphasis added). Joshua strongly implies, but does not state explicitly, that “the gods” included Egyptian gods.

Ezekiel, speaking in God’s name, notes that, when the Israelites were in Egypt, God commanded them to fling away the abominations of their eyes and not to defile themselves with the idols of Egypt (גִּלּוּלֵי מִצְרַיִם, Ezek 20:7).⁵⁷ Instead of obeying, the

54. Milgrom 2000 1518–1520.

55. Levine 2003 118–119.

56. Hartley 1992 293.

57. The JPS renders גִּלּוּלֵי מִצְרַיִם as “the fetishes of Egypt.” *HALOT* notes that גִּלּוּלִים are “(images of) idols” and that the term is used “always polemically and contemptuously.”

Israelites refused to listen and neither flung away the abominations of the their eyes nor abandoned the idols of Egypt (Ezek 20:8). God had resolved to pour out his fury and vent his anger on the Israelites there in Egypt, but refrained because he had made it known to the nations that he would bring the Israelites out of Egypt (Ezek 20.9). Thus, according to Ezekiel, God’s first outpouring of anger was not in reaction to the golden calf (Ex 32:10), but in response to the people’s unwillingness to cease worshipping Egyptian gods when they were still in Egypt.⁵⁸

(3) Patriarchal and National Origins Outside the Hebrew Bible

In addition to the Hebrew Bible, which Josephus regarded as a collection of accurate and possibly inspired sources, pre-second century CE Jewish literature preserved a range of traditions about the Jews’ national origins on which Josephus could draw, but which were not shaped by the needs of addressing a first-century Roman audience. This includes the Septuagint, which can serve as evidence for the original text of the Hebrew Bible, as the analysis of Jeremiah on page 57 f. above shows, and which can also provide evidence for the evolution and interpretation of biblical traditions at the time of its translation from the Hebrew.⁵⁹

(a) Patriarchal Origins

Jewish literature from outside the Hebrew Bible preserves and modifies accounts of the origins of the patriarchs, which are important, in part, because these traditions

58. As Olley notes (Olley 2009 364).

59. The scholarly consensus dates the Greek translation of the Pentateuch to the mid-third century BCE, with the translations of the Prophets and Writings following afterwards and available by the mid second century BCE (Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.1:476–477; Jobes and Silva 2000 34; Aitken 2015 3–4).

provide the Jews with non-Egyptian origins. Several ancient Jewish sources clarify Genesis's vague account of Abraham's origins. Although the LXX embroiders the Hebrew to specify that Abraham was born in Haran in Mesopotamia, many other sources portray Abraham as Chaldean.

The Septuagint version of Genesis 11:28 explains that Abraham's brother Haran was born in Chaldea, by rendering מולדתו ארץ as "the land in which he was born (ἡ ἐγενήθη)." When Abraham instructs his servant to find a wife for Isaac, LXX Genesis again clarifies that מולדתי... ארצי (Gn 24:4) and ארץ מולדתי (Gn 24:7) refer to "the land where [Abraham] was born,"⁶⁰ which is Mesopotamia whither the servants travels (Gn 24:10, cf. MT: ארם נהרם). LXX Genesis consistently uses Mesopotamia to translate Paddan-aram, but retains references to Haran from the MT.⁶¹ The LXX makes Haran in Mesopotamia Abraham's birthplace, not Chaldea.

Jubilees and Acts 7 each resolve the ambiguity in Gn 12:1 and make Abraham a Chaldean.⁶² All of the action in *Jubilees* 11, including Abraham's birth (*Jub.* 11:15), takes place in Chaldea. *Jubilees* also clarifies Gn 12:1 by modifying the Hebrew to have Abraham ask God in Haran: "Shall I return to Ur of the Chaldeans who are looking for

60. Gn 24:4 εἰς τὴν γῆν μου, οὗ ἐγενόμην; Gn 24:7 ἐκ τῆς γῆς, ἧς ἐγενήθη.

61. Mesopotamia for Paddan-aram: Gn 25:20; 28:2, 5–7; 31:18; 33:18; 35:9, 26; 46:15; 48:7. Haran: Gen 11:31–32; 12:4–5; 27:43; 28:10; 29:4.

62. Proposed dates for *Jubilees*: 161–140 BCE (Wintermute *OTP* II:43–44); 170–150 BCE (Vanderkam 1989 II:v–vi); soon after 161 BCE (Vermes Schürer–Vermes III.1:312–313). Kugel dates *Jubilees* to the second century BCE, but notes an earlier date is possible (Kugel 2012 4).

On the dating of Acts, see the excellent discussion in Fitzmyer (Fitzmyer 1998 51–55), who suggests 80–85 CE as the most plausible date. Witherington argues for 70's–early 80's CE (Witherington III 1998 60–63). Pervo prefers c. 115 CE (Pervo 2009 5).

me to return to them? Or am I to remain here in this place?” (*Jub.* 12:21; Vanderkam). God gives the same answer in *Jub.* 12:22 as in Gn 12:1, but it has a new meaning as a reply to Abraham’s question, as Kugel observes: “Come forth from your land and from your kin”—meaning do not return to Ur—“and from your father’s house”—meaning here in Haran.⁶³ Descent from Abraham is a recurring theme in the New Testament.⁶⁴ However, only Stephen’s speech in Acts 7, which may reflect first century CE Jewish traditions about the Jews’ early history, mentions Abraham’s origins and implies that he is Chaldean. Stephen begins his speech before the Sanhedrin⁶⁵ by observing, apparently *contra* Gn 12:1, that the glory of God appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran (Acts 7:2), and told him to leave his country and his kin (συγγένεια, Acts 7:3).⁶⁶ Stephen underscores this point by noting that Abraham then left Chaldea and went to Haran (Acts 7:4).⁶⁷

Other authors also present Abraham as a Chaldean. Eusebius, drawing on Alexander Polyhistor, cites a Eupolemus, a Jewish author from the second century BCE, who reports that Abraham was born in the Babylonian city of Camarene, which some people call Ourie, which, in turn, Eupolemus notes, means a city of the Chaldeans (Ps.-Eup. 1.3).⁶⁸ Recension B of the hymn of Pseudo-Orpheus, extant in Clement of

63. Translation: Wintermute, *OTP*. Kugel 2012 90–91.

64. Paul as a descendant of Abraham: 2 Cor 11:22, Rom 11:1; Abraham’s faith and the Gentiles: Gal 3; Rom 4, 9–11; Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus: Mt 1:1; John the Baptist’s rebuke: Mt 3:9; Jewish crowds: Jn 8:33, 39, 53; cf. Jesus’s reply: Jn 8:37, 56; Peter and Paul addressing Jews: Acts 3:25, 13:26.

65. τὸ συνέδριον (Acts 6:12, 15): “Sanhedrin” (Fitzmyer, AB; Johnson, *Sacra Pagina*); “council” (NRSV; Pervo, *Hermeneia*).

66. Stephen omits the third part of Gn 12:1, “and from your father’s house.”

67. Fitzmyer comments that Stephen’s account agrees with Gn 15:7 (Fitzmyer 1998 369).

68. = Eus. *P.E.* 9.17.1.3. Most scholars doubt Eusebius’ attribution and refer to the author

Alexandria, mentions “a certain person, a unique figure, by descent an offshoot / Of the Chaldean race” (Ps.-Orph. Rec. B vv. 27–28).⁶⁹ Clement and modern scholars contend that this is a reference to Abraham.⁷⁰

Philo, who has a deeply negative view of Chaldean astrology, consistently emphasizes Abraham’s departure from Chaldea and plays down his “Chaldeanness.” In *De Abrahamo*, perhaps the second book of *Exposition*,⁷¹ which he wrote for a mixed audience of Jews and non-Jews,⁷² Philo begins his account of Abraham’s life by describing his departure from his country, his kin, and his father’s house, in a paraphrase

cited in *P.E.* 9.17.1–9 as Pseudo-Eupolemus, a Jew or Samaritan from the first half of the second century BCE. On the dating of Pseudo-Eupolemus, see Holladay *FHJA* I:157–158; Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.1:530. Holladay *FHJA* I:158–159 and Attridge 1984 165–166 both argue that Pseudo-Eupolemus was a Samaritan. Millar holds that Pseudo-Eupolemus need not be a Samaritan (Millar 1978 6 n. 12). Goodman comments that Pseudo-Eupolemus could have been a Jew or a Samaritan (Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.1:529). Doran and Pearson maintain that *P.E.* 9.17.1–9 is the work of the Eupolemus cited elsewhere in Eusebius and Clement of Alexandria’s *Stromata* (Doran *OTP* II:873–876; Pearson 1999 42–43). Goodman considers the attribution of *P.E.* 9.17.1–9 uncertain (Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.1:517, 517 n. 48).

69. Translation: Holladay *FHJA*. On the patristic sources of Pseudo-Orpheus, see Holladay *FHJA* IV:103–150. Goodman dates recension B to anytime between the second century BCE and Clement in the late second century CE (Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.1:665).

70. Clement of Alexandria *Strom.* 5.14.123; Holladay *FHJA* IV:176, 182; Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.1:662. See the discussion of recension C below in section A3b page 74 f.

71. Following *De Opificio Mundi*; see Gorez 1966 11; Morris Schürer–Vermes III.2: 844–846; Royse 2009 46–48.

72. *Exposition* was probably aimed at a mixed audience of Jews and non-Jews, both of which may have lacked detailed knowledge of Jewish practices or belief (Birnbbaum 1996 19, 28, and *passim*; Royse 2009 32). Morris contends that the *Exposition* is “exoteric” and addressed a wider readership than that of the *Legum Allegoria* (Morris Schürer–Vermes III.2:840). On the relation between Philo’s *Life of Moses* and *Exposition*, see page 71 n. 91. On the audience of Philo’s *Legum Allegoria*, see page 65 n. 76.

of Gn 12:1 (*Abr.* 62).⁷³ Distancing Abraham from his as yet unnamed πατρίς, Philo adds that Abraham eagerly obeyed the oracle, migrating as a man leaving a foreign country to return home, not as a man leaving home to go to a foreign country (*Abr.* 62). So, giving no thought to his fellow-tribesmen, his people, his schoolmates, his blood relations from the same mother and father, his country (πατρίς), his ancestral customs, and his communal upbringing, Abraham speedily migrated first from Chaldea—Philo’s first use of the term—to Haran and then from Haran elsewhere (*Abr.* 67). The reason for Philo’s delay in mentioning Chaldea is soon apparent: because of their study of astronomy, the Chaldeans believed that the cosmos itself was God, impiously likening the thing created to the creator (*Abr.* 69). “The man,” Philo continues, who was reared (συντρέφω) in this doctrine and who acted like a Chaldean (χαλδαῖζω) for a long time, perceived the light, as if waking from a deep sleep, and recognized the world’s chariot-driver and pilot (*Abr.* 70). Significantly, although his audience would surely have concluded that Abraham’s kin were Chaldean, Philo declines in *Abr.* 70 to mention Abraham by name and prefers to present “the man” as *reared as* and *acting like a Chaldean*, using χαλδαῖζω, a verb which Philo coins, rather than simply *being* Chaldean by origin.⁷⁴ Philo subsequently underscores this distinction by noting that God appeared to Abraham only after Abraham had ceased acting like a Chaldean (χαλδαῖζω; *Abr.* 77) and observing that Abraham had been reared (τρέφω) and lived much of life his among the Chaldeans (*Abr.* 188). Philo also distances Abraham from Chaldea by repeatedly mentioning his departure (*Abr.* 62, 66, 67, 72, 212). Oddly, Philo describes Abraham as the founder of the nation only in the

73. Philo: ἡ πατρίς...ὁ συγγένεια...ὁ πατρῷος ὁ οἶκος; Gn 12:1: ὁ γῆ σου...ὁ συγγένεια σου...ὁ οἶκος τοῦ πατρός σου.

74. The TLG contains no instances of χαλδαῖζω before Philo, who uses it seven times (*Migr.* 184, *Her.* 99, *Mut.* 16, *Somn.* 1.161, *Abr.* 70, 77 [twice]).

last sentence of the work (*Abr.* 276).

Philo provides a similar portrait of Abraham towards the end of *On the Virtues*, also part of *Exposition*, where he presents characters from Genesis, without naming them, to demonstrate that nobility depends solely on one's actions, not the virtues or vices of one's ancestors.⁷⁵ Omitting Abraham's name, *Virt.* 212 notes that the oldest member of the Jewish nation was a Chaldean by descent and the son of an astronomer. Philo then rhetorically asks what could be worse or a more sure sign of low birth of the soul (*Virt.* 213). Perceiving the one uncreated maker of all, he left his country, his kin, and his father's house to escape polytheistic doctrine and deceit (*Virt.* 214).

In *Legum Allegoria*, probably aimed primarily at a Jewish audience, Philo disparages Chaldeans and emphasizes that God cut Abraham off from the Chaldeans to make him the founder of a new nation.⁷⁶ To act like a Chaldean (*χαλδαϊζῶ*) is opposed to knowing the truth (*Migr.* 184); is foreign, barbarous, opposed to being rational and to knowing God (*Somn.* 1.161); and only by abandoning it can one know God (*Heir.* 99). Philo comments that scripture reports that Terah left Chaldea taking Abraham, not to inform us that some people left behind their ancestral land (*ὁ...πατρῶος γῆ*) in order to make a foreign land their country (*πατρίς*; *Somn.* 1.52), but to teach us that Chaldean astronomers should scrutinize themselves rather than the heavens (*Somn.* 1.53–54). In *Who is the Heir of Divine Things?*, an allegorical interpretation of Gn 15:2–18, Philo examines God's promise that Abraham would go to his "fathers" in peace (Gn 15:15),

75. Tamar is the sole exception (*Virt.* 220–222). Philo fails to name Adam, Cain, Noah, Ham, Abraham, Isaac, Esau, Jacob, Zilpah, and Bilhah (*Virt.* 198–227).

76. The scholarly consensus holds that *Legum Allegoria* assumes a well-informed Jewish audience (Goodenough 1933, 118; Morris Schürer–Vermes III.2:840; Birnbaum 1996 144, 158; Royse 2009 32).

which follows God’s comment that he had brought Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees (Gn 15:7). Philo argues that, by “fathers,” Moses could not have meant those who live in Chaldea and were Abraham’s only kin because the oracle (Gn 12:1) had ordered Abraham to live apart from those of his blood (*Her.* 277). Since it would have been unreasonable for the leader of a new ἔθνος and γένος to be connected with the old, God gave him a new ἔθνος and γένος, cutting him off from the old one (*Her.* 278). God made Abraham an ἐθνάρχης and γενάρχης, a root from which came the shoot Israel (*Her.* 279).

The Greek version of *Testament of Naphtali*, evidently concerned by the origins of Bilhah and Zilpah, includes extra-biblical material making them both Chaldean by descent and kinswomen of Abraham.⁷⁷ Genesis 30 describes Bilhah and Zilpah as the slave girls of Rachel and Leah, respectively, but says nothing about their origins.⁷⁸ In the Greek version of *Testament of Naphtali*, however, Naphtali reports that Bilhah’s father was Rotheos (*T. Naph.* 1:9) and that Zilpah was her sister (*T. Naph.* 1:11). Rotheos, Naphtali observes, was from the γένος of Abraham and a Chaldean (*T. Naph.* 1:11).⁷⁹ *T. Naph.* thus establishes that Dan and Naphtali, and Gad and Asher, the children of Bilhah and Zilpah, respectively, were of Chaldean descent and of the γένος of

77. Goodman dates the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* to 100–63 BCE (Schürer–Vermes III.2:774). Charlesworth ascribes the *Testaments* to the Maccabean period, perhaps to 137–107 BCE (*OTP* I: 777–778).

78. On Zilpah and Bilhah as slaves, see section B1b page 86.

79. In 4Q215 (= 4QTNaph), a late Hasmonean manuscript (Kugler 2001 29) which seems to parallel *T. Naph.* 1:9–12, Bilhah’s father is Ahiyot, but he is neither related to Abraham nor Chaldean, and the relevant line in 4Q215 is too short to contain this extra information, as Stone notes (Stone 1996 27). Hollander and De Jonge, and Kugler argue that 4Q215 represents the tradition the author of *T. Naph.* may have used, but is not a parallel version of the same work (Hollander and De Jonge 1985 299; Kugler 2001 29, 71).

Abraham on both their mother's and father's sides.⁸⁰

(b) National Origins

Some extra-biblical Jewish literary sources modify the biblical account of the Jews' national origins in Egypt to emphasize that the Jews came from elsewhere (*Sibylline Oracle* 3, Ezekiel the Tragedian) or to deny that the Jews were originally Egyptian (Judith). Other extra-biblical sources present an ambivalent portrait which denies that the Jews were Egyptians, but emphasizes their strong connection to Egypt (Artapanus, Philo). Jewish traditions also depict the Israelites as followers of Egyptian customs or suggest that they mixed with native Egyptians.

The third Sibylline oracle, in a passage written by a Jew in the mid-second century BCE, emphasizes that the Jews were originally virtuous Chaldeans.⁸¹ *Sibylline Oracles* 3.218–219 notes that there is a city in Ur of the Chaldeans from which comes a γένοϛ of the most righteous men. Seemingly to avoid tainting this people with negative stereotypes about Chaldeans, the oracle immediately reports that these people do not study the course of the sun or moon, or investigate portents, and do not practice the astrological predictions of the Chaldeans, which is a profitless task performed by fools (3:221–230). These righteous men, who have many positive traits,⁸² are the people of the twelve tribes who will depart Egypt (3:248), for whom God will appoint a great man,

80. As both Charlesworth (*OTP* I:881) and Stone (Stone 1996 35) comment.

81. The third Sibylline oracle includes five oracles, which Collins argues were composed by a Jew in the circle of Onias (Collins 1984 365–367). The passage treated here falls in the third oracle, lines 196–294. Goodman notes that *Sib. Or.* 3 is a Jewish composition and identifies only line 776 as a possible Christian interpolation (Goodman Schürer-Vermes III.1: 632, 635). Goodman suggests a general date of c. 150 BCE (Goodman Schürer-Vermes III.1: 636). Collins proposes 163–145 BCE (Collins 1984 367).

82. They love righteousness and virtue (3:234), have just measurements (3:237), and care for the poor (3:244–245)

Moses, as leader (3:252–253), and to whom God will give the Law (3:256–257).

Ezekiel the Tragedian's *Exagoge* may suggest that the Jews' homeland is Canaan. Moses begins his opening monologue in *Exagoge* by recapitulating Ex 1:1, but, in contrast with Ex 1:1 which describes the Israelites' arrival in Egypt, Moses notes that Jacob left Canaan and came to Egypt (Ezek. Trag. 1–2). This may emphasize that Canaan was the Israelites' land of origin.⁸³ Subsequently, after describing the plagues he will send against Egypt, God instructs Moses to tell the Israelites that God will lead them to another land, which he had promised to their ancestors (153–155). God also directs Moses to tell the people to celebrate the festival of unleavened bread when they have entered their own land as on the morning that they departed Egypt (167–168). This echo of Ex 12:25, which mentions “the land that the Lord will give you,” may emphasize the contrast between Canaan, presumably the land promised to their ancestors, and Egypt.⁸⁴

The book of Judith has an independent third-party tell a Babylonian general that the Jews are originally Chaldean, evidently to prove that they are not Egyptians.⁸⁵ When

83. Cf. Dt 26:5 and 1 Sam 12:8 which echo Ex 1:1 but do not mention the departure from Canaan. Jacobson notes that accounts of the exodus traditionally begin with Jacob's descent to Egypt (Jacobson 1983 70–71).

Eusebius' extract at *P.E.* 9.28.2 probably begins with the first line of the play, (Jacobson 1983 70–72; Robertson *OTP* II:808).

Holladay dates *Exagoge* to the second century BCE (Holladay *FHJA* II:308–312), Jacobson suggests 150–100 BCE (Jacobson 1983 5–13), Robertson prefers 200–150 BCE (Robertson *OTP* II: 803–804). Fraser argues that Ezekiel's familiarity with Euripides favors a third century BCE date (Fraser 1972 I: 707–708). Goodman places *Exagoge* between the *LXX* (c. 250 BCE) and *Polyhistor* (80–40 BCE) (Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.1: 565).

84. Robertson *OTP* II: 815 notes this parallel.

85. The consensus holds that Judith was written originally in Hebrew (Vermes Schürer–Vermes III.1:219; Moore 1985 66; Boyd-Taylor 2007 441). Joosten suggests a Greek original (Joosten 2007 160–168, 179). Vermes dates Judith to the era of Daniel and the Maccabees (Vermes Schürer–Vermes III.1:218–9) and Joosten to the Maccabean era (Joosten 2007 168–169, 179). Moore suggests the end of the reign of John Hyrcanus

Holofernes approaches the Judean hills, he asks the Canaanites about the people who live there (Jdt 5:1–4). Achior, the leader of the Ammonites, promises to tell the truth and not to lie, and reports that the Judeans are descendants of the Chaldeans (Jdt 5:5–6). Because they did not want to follow the gods of their ancestors, who lived in Chaldea, and the ways of their progenitors, they were driven out and lived in Mesopotamia (Jdt 5:7–8). They moved to Canaan, as commanded by God (Jdt 5:9), fled to Egypt during a famine (Jdt 5:10), and later departed Egypt and settled in the hills (Jdt 5:11–19). Achior advises Holofernes to bypass the people because their God will defend them (Jdt 5:21). Angered by Achior’s advice (Jdt 6:1–4), Holofernes swears to punish Achior after he takes revenge on “the race of those out of Egypt” (Jdt 6:5; NETS). Instead of referring to the Judeans’ departure from Egypt (Jdt 5:12), Holofernes seems to think that they are Egyptian by origin, and Judith employs Achior’s testimony to prove that they are not.⁸⁶

Artapanus and Philo present a more complicated picture of the Jews’ relationship with Egypt and seem to link the Jews to Egypt in an essential way, but to deny that they are Egyptians.

Artapanus, a Jew writing in Egypt between c. 250 and c. 50 BCE, makes Moses central to Egyptian culture, but carefully emphasizes that the Jews were a separate people.⁸⁷ His *Judaica* reports that Abraham and his household went to Egypt and lived

(135–104 BCE) or the beginning of the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (103–78 BCE) (Moore 1985 67–70). Some scholars speculatively locate the author of Judith in Syria (Vermees Schürer–Vermees III.1:219); Moore suggests an early Pharisee writing in Palestine (Moore 1985 70–71); Joosten proposes Alexandria (Joosten 2007 169).

86. As Roitman and Joosten also note (Roitman 1994 246; Joosten 2007 174–175).

87. For Artapanus’s account of Moses, see page 77.

Although Artapanus is a Persian name, the scholarly consensus is that he was a Jew,

there for twenty years, and that Abraham then departed to return to the regions of Syria (Artap. 1), which perhaps emphasizes that Abraham and his household were not from Egypt.⁸⁸ Artapanus adds the extra-biblical detail that many members of Abraham's household stayed behind in Egypt (Artap. 1); this suggests that Jews had lived in Egypt from ancient times as a distinct people.⁸⁹ In *Concerning the Jews*, Artapanus reports that Joseph's father and brothers joined him in Egypt and settled in Sais and Heliopolis, and then comments that "the Syrians" multiplied in Egypt (Artap. 2.3), which may gently remind his readers that the Israelites were not originally Egyptian. Artapanus subsequently recounts that Merris, the granddaughter of the Pharaoh during the time of Abraham, chose a son for herself from the Jews and named him Moses (Artap. 3.3). This may imply that Moses was a descendant of the Jews who remained in Egypt when Abraham return to Syria.⁹⁰ Artapanus's account of the burning bush emphasizes that the Jews have their own ancient land, which is not Egypt: in contrast to Ex 3:7–8, where

perhaps of mixed descent (Fraser 1972 I: 706; Holladay *FHJA* I:189; Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.1: 522–523; Collins *OTP* II: 891–892). Goodman argues that c. 250 BCE (LXX) to c. 50 BCE (Polyhistor) is the only non-speculative range of possible dates (Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.1: 523–524). Collins suggests 250–100 BCE (Collins 2000 38–39). Fraser and Holladay propose 180–145 BCE (Fraser 1972 I: 704; Holladay *FHJA* I:190). The consensus locates Artapanus in Egypt, but perhaps outside Alexandria (Fraser 1972 I: 706; Holladay *FHJA* I:190; Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.1: 523; Collins 2000 39).

88. As Freudenthal also argued, according to Holladay (Freudenthal 1874 161; Holladay *FHJA* I:227). Holladay and Zellentin, respectively, observe that "Syria" commonly referred to Canaan (Holladay *FHJA* I: 227) or Judea (Zellentin, BNJ 726 F1).

89. Cf. Gn 12:19–13:1. Freudenthal thought this was a tradition about the Hycsos unknown to Manetho (Freudenthal 1874 156–157; cf. Holladay *FHJA* I:227). See also Collins *OTP* II:897 n. f. For Manetho's account of the Hycsos see Chapter 5 C2 page 218 ff.

90. Collins proposes the text should read "Joseph" not "Abraham" (Collins *OTP* II: 898 n. a), and Holladay suggests "Jacob" (Holladay *FHJA* I:230 n. 31). However, there are no textual variants, cf. Schroeder and des Places 1991 270.

God tells Moses that he will lead the Israelites out of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, Artapanus reports that Moses heard a voice telling him to rescue the Jews and lead them to their ancient fatherland (Artap. 3.21).

Philo carefully highlights that the Israelites were not originally Egyptians, but also describes Egypt as their second homeland. In *Life of Moses*, which may have been intended for a non-Jewish audience, perhaps as an introduction to the rest of *Exposition*,⁹¹ Philo announces that he will begin with the necessary fact that Moses was a Chaldean by descent who was born in Egypt because his ancestors had migrated there on account of a famine in Babylonia (*Mos.* 1.5). After describing Moses's childhood, Philo returns to this theme and notes that the Jews (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) were foreigners (ξένοι) in Egypt and that the founders of the people had migrated from Babylonia (*Mos.* 1.34). Moreover, these foreigners were really suppliants (ικέται) and resident aliens (μέτοικοι)

91. On the audience of *Exposition*, see page 63 n. 72 above. Goodenough argues that *Mos.* was written for non-Jews who might be interested in Judaism. Philo wrote *Exposition*, according to Goodenough, to meet the needs of a non-Jew who had read *Mos.* and wanted more information about the Pentateuch (Goodenough 1933 124–125). However, Goodenough also implies that *Exposition* may have been aimed at both less-informed Jews and non-Jews (Goodenough 1933 117–118). Morris accepts that *Mos.* and *Exposition* address an “exoteric” audience (Morris Schürer–Vermes III.2: 840, 840 n. 11, 855), and argues that *Mos.* can not be part of *Exposition*, but was probably an introduction to it (pp. 854–855). Royse holds that *Mos.* is closely connected to *Exposition*, but not part of it and categorizes it with “apologetic and historical” works (Royse 2009 50–51), which grants that it may have been aimed at both Jews and non-Jews. Royse notes that Goodenough’s claim of a non-Jewish audience for *Exposition* is not widely accepted (Royse 2009 32). Borgen views *Mos.* as a companion to *Exposition* (Borgen 1984 234). Birnbaum observes that Philo rarely specifies whom he is addressing, but notes that *Mos.* opens by commenting that it is directed to those who deserve not to remain ignorant of the story of Moses’s life (*Mos.* 1.1; Birnbaum 1996 18, 18 n. 35). Feldman describes *Mos.* as an “official biography” aimed primarily at non-Jews to introduce them to Judaism (Feldman 2005 257–258; Feldman 2007 11–16).

who sought equal civil rights, and were already nearly citizens because they differed little from the natives (*Mos.* 1.35). They had left behind their homeland and come to Egypt to live there securely as though in a second fatherland (*Mos.* 1.36). Later, *Mos.* 1.142 refers back to the start of the work and reiterates that the Hebrews were foreigners and suppliants. Readers of *Life of Moses* could hardly fail to conclude that the Jews (strangers, suppliants, resident aliens, people who had left their own land and migrated to Egypt hoping it would be a second fatherland) were not originally Egyptians (the natives).⁹² *Questions on Exodus* 2.2 also describes the Hebrews as ξένοι in Egypt. *Hypothetica*, an apologetic work aimed at non-Jews, and *Special Laws*, part of the *Legum Allegoria*, both note that the Jews migrated from Syria to Egypt (*Hypoth.* 6.1; *Spec. Leg.* 2.217).

Although Philo emphasizes that the Jews were not Egyptian, he does not present a consistent picture of their origins. Philo's comment that Moses was a Chaldean (*Mos.* 1.5) might imply that the Jews were originally Chaldean, but Philo does not state this explicitly. The departure of the Jews' ancestors from Babylonia (*Mos.* 1.5, 34), their homeland (*Mos.* 1.35), might suggest that they were Babylonian. Elsewhere, however, Philo's conception of "Babylonia" seems confused. *Questions on Genesis* 4.243, probably intended for Jewish audience, explains that Abraham sent Isaac to his kin in Mesopotamia, which it describes as a place where Chaldeans and Babylonians dwell. Philo's comment in *Abr.* 188 that child murder is not practiced in Babylonia, in Mesopotamia, and by the Chaldean nation implies that they are distinct entities. The Jews' migration from Syria might indicate that they were Syrians (*Hypoth.* 6.1, *Spec. Leg.*

92. Arnaldez et al. note the dense collocation in *Mos.* 1.34–36 of Greek social terms (Arnaldez et al. 1967 42 n. 5).

2.217); *Hypoth* 6.1 explains that the Jews left Egypt to return to their ancient fatherland, evidently meaning Syria. Similarly, *Life of Moses* notes that, when they approached Syria, the Jews encountered some of their kin who had remained behind when they migrated to Egypt (*Mos.* 2.39–40).

However, Philo also implies that the Jews were deeply connected to Egypt. Philo repeatedly describes the Jews' departure from Egypt using ἀποικία/ἀποικίζω and μετανίστημι, terms which could suggest the Jews were leaving their homeland.⁹³ At the burning bush, God encourages Moses to be leader of the nation's migration (ἀποικία) from Egypt (*Mos.* 1.71). The 600,000 Jews who depart Egypt are emigrants (μετανισταμένοι, *Mos.* 1.147). As leader, Moses sends the colony (ἀποικία) into Phoenicia, Coele Syria, and Palestine (*Mos.* 1.163). When Moses subsequently dispatches the spies (cf. Nu 13:1–20), it is to reconnoiter the land which the nation is colonizing (ἀποικίζω, *Mos.* 1.220). Philo uses these terms in a similar way throughout *Life of Moses*.⁹⁴

Philo also reports that the Israelites mixed with the native Egyptians. Although he could have omitted the עַרְבֵי רֶבֶךָ of Ex 12:38, Philo relates that a crowd consisting of a mixed rabble and servants departed Egypt with the Jews and compares the throng to a bastard child accompanying the legitimate multitude (*Mos.* 1.147). This crowd consisted of those born to Hebrew fathers by Egyptian women, who had been assigned to the father's γένος (*idem*).

93. Philo describes the Jews' migration from Babylon using μετανίστημι in *Mos.* 1.5, 34.

94. ἀποικία/ἀποικίζω: *Mos.* 1.170, 195, 222, 233, 236, 237, 239, 246, 254, 255.
μετανίστημι: 1.193, 254; 2.72, 184.

Several texts from outside the Hebrew Bible make a special effort to establish that Moses was not Egyptian.⁹⁵ Recension C of the hymn of Pseudo-Orpheus mentions “one born in the undergrowth” (v. 41) who received “God’s teaching on the two-tablet law” (v. 42), which seems to shift the focus of the poem to Moses.⁹⁶ By adding v. 26 to recension B, recension C’s reference to a certain Chaldean reads: “For no one among mortals could see the ruler of men, / Except a certain person, a unique figure, by descent an offshoot / Of the Chaldean race” (Ps.-Orph. Rec. C vv. 26–28),⁹⁷ which, in context, seems to claim that Moses was a Chaldean, although it may refer both to Moses and Abraham.⁹⁸

Some Jewish sources modify the Ex 2 account of Moses’s adoption and upbringing to emphasize his Jewishness, perhaps to solve midrashic problems, but possibly also to refute claims that Moses was Egyptian. In Ex 2:6, Pharaoh’s daughter immediately recognizes, without explanation, that the child in the basket is a Hebrew.⁹⁹ However, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum (LAB)*, perhaps from the first century CE, reports that Moses was born “in the covenant of God and in the covenant of his flesh”

95. For Greco-Roman accounts of Jewish origins which mention Moses, see Chapter 3 B page 124 ff.

96. Translation: Holladay *FHJA* IV:195. Goodman dates Rec. C to anytime from the date of Rec. B (which he dates to anytime from the second century BCE to the second century CE) to Eusebius, but notes that a Hellenistic date is possible (Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.2:666).

97. Translation: Holladay *FHJA* IV:195.

98. As Holladay comments (Holladay *FHJA* IV:196, 207–208). Goodman understands Rec. C vv. 27–28 = Rec. B vv. 27–28 to refer to Abraham (Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.2:662). A marginal gloss in the Theosophia Tubingensis identifies the “Chaldean” with Moses (Holladay *FHJA* IV:229; Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.1 662 n. 258).

99. See page 49 and page 49 n. 22 above.

(*LAB* 9.13), which probably means that Moses was born circumcised.¹⁰⁰ When Pharaoh's daughter sees that Moses is "in the covenant" (*in zaticon*, *LAB* 9:15), which *LAB* helpfully explains means "in the covenant of the flesh" or circumcised, she concludes, as in Ex 2:6, that he must be a Hebrew.¹⁰¹ Artapanus omits the biblical account of the discovery of Moses and reports that Merris took one of the Jews's children as her own (*Artap.* 3.3).¹⁰²

Philo emphasizes that Moses was not Egyptian by birth, but allows the nuance that he was somewhat Egyptian by upbringing. In *Life of Moses*, Philo highlights that he will begin at the necessary beginning and reports that Moses was a Chaldean by descent who, by contrast, was born and reared in Egypt (*Mos.* 1.5). Philo held an extremely negative view of Chaldeans, as his portrayal of Abraham's Chaldean origins demonstrates.¹⁰³ Thus, Philo's claim that he needs to begin by establishing that Moses was Chaldean by origin suggests that he must have thought that it was crucial to prove that Moses was *not* Egyptian by descent. Despite his distaste for Chaldean astrology, which he links with the ignobility of the soul (*Virt.* 212–213), Philo even reports that

100. As Harrington and Jacobson each note (Harrington, *OTP* II:316 n. o; Jacobson 1996 425).

The consensus dates *LAB* to the first or early-second century CE, although it could be much later. Proposed dates: first century CE: Harrington *OTP* II.299, Murphy 1993 3, Vermes 1961 90, Vermes Schürer–Vermes III.1:328–329; late-first century CE, not second century CE: James 1917, 32–33, 33 n. 1; after 70 CE: Kisch 1949 3, citing James 1917 7, 32–33; 70–before 132 CE: Feldman 1971 xxvii–xxxi; 70–150 CE (Jacobson 1996 199–210. Ilan, however, dates *LAB* to the third or fourth century CE Rome (Ilan 2009 373–381).

101. For a discussion of *in zaticon*, see Jacobson 1996 427–428.

102. Holladay suggests that Artapanus is countering claims that Moses was an Egyptian (Holladay *FHJA* I:321).

103. See page 63 ff. above.

Moses learned the Chaldean knowledge of the heavens (*Mos.* 1.23). Philo's account also hints that he knew of claims that Moses was Egyptian by birth and wanted to explain them away: *Mos.* 1.18–19 reports that Moses was weaned earlier than usual and taken to the Egyptian princess, who contrived to enlarge her womb so she could pass as his real mother. Yet, Philo also depicts Moses as partially Egyptian. *Life of Moses* 1.5 notes that he was born and reared in Egypt. Moses also knew that he had two sets of parents (*Mos.* 1.33). Confusingly, Philo suggests that Moses had two upbringings, one in the Egyptian palace (*Mos.* 1.20–29, cf. 1.5) and another in the customs of his kin and ancestors, which he eventually preferred (*Mos.* 1.31–32).

Ezekiel the Tragedian and Philo modify the story of Moses's encounter with Raguel's daughters to remove their characterization of him as an Egyptian (cf. Ex 2:19). In *Exagoge*, when Moses asks Raguel's daughters who they are, Zipporah addresses Moses as "stranger" (ξένε; Ezek. Trag. 60). Zipporah subsequently explains to her companion Chum that her father had given her to "this stranger" as a wife (Ezek. Trag. 67). Her father later interprets Moses's dream and addresses him as "O friend/stranger" (Ezek. Trag. 83). Ezekiel may describe Moses as a ξένος in v. 60 because Zipporah has only just met him, and again in vv. 67 and 83 because Moses is a guest in Raguel's house,¹⁰⁴ but he may also reject the idea that Moses looked or acted like an Egyptian.

Tellingly, Philo omits the daughters' description of Moses as an Egyptian in *Life of Moses*, intended for a wide readership, but includes it and criticizes the daughters in

104. As Holladay and Jacobson each suggest (Holladay *FHJA* II:446–447; Jacobson 1983 89).

Legum Allegoria when addressing Jews. In *Life of Moses*, when Raguel’s daughters run home from the well and tell their father in detail what happened, Raguel is filled with a great desire to see the stranger (*Mos.* 1.58). By contrast, in *The Change of Names*, in *Legum Allegoria*, the seven daughters, who represent the “unreasoning element” (*Mut.* 111; Colson, LCL), call Moses an Egyptian because they are unable to rise above their nature, although he was not only a Hebrew, but from the most pure offspring of the Hebrews who alone can serve as a priest (*Mut.* 117).

Some sources from outside the Hebrew Bible link the Jews with Egyptian customs. In *Questions on Genesis*, Philo begins to explain why God requires only males to be circumcised (Gn 17:10) by noting that the Egyptian custom is to circumcise marriageable men *and* women (*QG* 3.47). Philo’s comment that God commanded circumcision for men *only* “for many reasons” (*idem*) may imply that the Jewish custom of circumcision is an Egyptian practice, modified by God.

Artapanus, whose account of Abraham seems to highlight that the Jews were not Egyptians, portrays Moses as the source of much Egyptian culture, including animal worship and Apis worship specifically. When Moses divided Egypt into nomes, he assigned to each a god to worship, choosing from cats, dogs, and ibises (*Artap.* 3.4). After defeating the invading Ethiopians, Moses and his compatriots founded the city of Hermopolis— probably named after Moses, who was called Hermes (*Artap.* 3.6)¹⁰⁵— and consecrated the ibis there (*Artap.* 3.9). When Moses returned, Cenephres, the Egyptian pharaoh, asked Moses, who had already invented many useful things (*Artap.*

105. Holladay *FHJA* I:234 n. 55, 235 n. 62.

3.4), to name something else beneficial to man. Moses recommended oxen and, as a result, Cenephres named a bull Apis and commanded the people to dedicate a temple to it (Artap. 3.12). Artapanus also hints at Egyptian anxiety about Moses's influence: Cenephres ordered the animals Moses had consecrated to be brought to the temple of Apis and buried there (Artap. 3.12).

Philo explicitly connects the golden calf with Egyptian worship in both *Legum Allegoria* and *Exposition*. In *Legum Allegoria*, Philo describes the golden calf (ὁ χρυσοῦς μόσχος) as an Egyptian idol (τὸ Αἰγυπτίων ἀφίδρυμα, *Post.* 158), and as “the Egyptian delusion” (ὁ Αἰγυπτιακός τῦφος, *Fug.* 90). Strikingly, Philo often refers to the golden calf not as a calf (μόσχος), but as a bull (ταῦρος) and identifies it as the animal revered by the Egyptians. In *On Drunkenness*, Philo identifies the delusion whose symbol is most honored among the Egyptians as a golden bull (χρυσοῦς ταῦρος; *Ebr.* 95). In *Life of Moses*, Philo comments that the Israelites became zealous for Egyptian fictions at Mount Sinai and fashioned a golden bull (χρυσοῦς ταῦρος) in imitation of the most sacred animal in Egypt (*Mos.* 2.162), which clearly identifies the golden calf with Apis. Subsequently, Philo refers back to the golden calf episode and notes that the Israelites made a golden bull in imitation of the Egyptian delusion (*Mos.* 2.270). In *Special Laws*, another work in *Exposition*, Philo describes the special merits that the Levites demonstrated when they punished the Israelites who mocked Moses's injunctions and built a golden bull (χρυσοῦς ταῦρος) in imitation of the Egyptian delusion (*Spec. Leg.* 3.125). *Special Laws* 1.79 similarly describes the Israelites as imitating the foolishness of Egypt, and the national delusion about irrational animals and bulls (ταῦρος) most of all. The majority of Philo's references to the golden calf mention

a bull and explicitly connect the incident with Egyptian worship.¹⁰⁶

The book of Acts also links the golden calf with Egyptian practice. As proof that the Jews had always rejected the Holy Spirit and persecuted the prophets (Acts 7:51–52), Stephen cites the example of Moses, whom the people disobeyed at Mount Sinai when “in their hearts they turned backed to Egypt” (Acts 7:39; NRSV) and made a calf to which they sacrificed (Acts 7:41).¹⁰⁷

B. The Jews’ Servile Origins in Jewish Sources

The story of the Jews’ servile origins centers on God’s promise to Abraham in Gn 15 that his descendants will be slaves in a foreign land and the promise’s fulfillment in Ex 1, which depicts Israelites as subject to unfree, compulsory labor in Egypt that the tradition characterizes as “slavery.” Genesis also links several figures in the patriarchal period with slavery, including Esau, Zilpah and Bilhah, and Joseph. This section examines the Genesis-Exodus accounts of the Jews’ national servitude and the servitude of these individuals, and the reception of these traditions in the rest of the Hebrew Bible and in extra-biblical literature. Josephus could have drawn on any of these traditions in his accounts of the Jews’ servile origins.

106. See also Pearce 2007 292–307.

107. Later Christian sources explicitly describe the golden calf as an image of Apis; see Lactantius *Inst.* 4.10; *Apost. Const.* 1.6, 6.20.

(1) Servile Origins in Genesis and Exodus

(a) National Servitude in Egypt

(i) God's Promise to Abraham

In Gn 15, God establishes a covenant with Abraham confirming the promises of Gn 12 to make Abraham into a great nation and to assign him the land of Canaan, but adds a crucial detail.¹⁰⁸ God tells Abraham that his ancestors will be aliens in a foreign land and then specifies *וְעַבְדוּם וְעַנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה* (Gn 15:13). Abraham's descendants are the subject of *וְעַבְדוּם* and the object of *וְעַנּוּ*; the natives of the foreign land are evidently the object of *וְעַבְדוּם* and the subject of *וְעַנּוּ*. In the Qal stem, the root *עבד* has a range of meanings including “to labor,” “to serve” another person, possibly as a slave, and “to perform cultic service” or “to worship.”¹⁰⁹ God thus predicts that Abraham's descendants will serve the natives, perhaps as slaves, and that they will in turn oppress Abraham's descendants. God re-emphasizes the fate of Abraham's descendants in Gn 15:14 by noting that that he will judge the nation whom they will serve (*הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ*), again using Qal *עבד*.

(ii) The Exodus Story

Exodus devotes seven verses to describing the Israelites' change of status in Egypt from invited guests to forced laborers, oppressed in servitude (Ex 1:7–14).¹¹⁰ After describing Israel's arrival in Egypt (Ex 1.1–5) and the subsequent death of Joseph and his generation (Ex 1:6),¹¹¹ Ex 1:7 deploys five verbs to describe how the children of

108. Cf. Gn 12:2, 7.

109. See, for example, *HALOT* s.v. *עבד*, and the useful discussion in Houtman 1993 43–44.

110. For the Israelites as invited guests, see Gn 45.9–13, 16–20; Gn 47.5–6, 11.

111. In Genesis, Israel is fertile and multiplies (Gn 47:27) before Joseph's death (Gn

Israel multiplied and filled the land.¹¹² For the new king over Egypt who did not know Joseph (Ex 1:8), the Israelites' fertility is a threat that requires a response (Ex 1:9–10). To prevent the Israelites, who are mightier than the Egyptians (Ex 1:9), from joining an enemy in wartime and “going up from the land” (Ex 1:10), the Egyptians pursue a new policy which Exodus describes twice, in Ex 1:11–12 and Ex 1:13–14.¹¹³

According to Ex 1:11, the Egyptians appointed “corvée masters” (שָׂרֵי מִסִּים; Propp, AB) over the Israelites in order to oppress or humiliate them (עָנָה) in their compulsory labor (סְבִלֹת).¹¹⁴ This policy was a failure, however, as the more the Egyptians oppressed (עָנָה) the Israelites, the more the Israelites flourished, so that the Egyptians feared them (Ex 1:12). The use of עָנָה in both v11 and v12 echoes its use in Gn 15:13.

Ex 1:13–14 may reiterate the Egyptian's new policy or may describe how that policy intensified after the failure described in Ex 1:11–12.¹¹⁵ Ex 1:13 describes the Egyptians' treatment of the Israelites as וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ ... בְּפָרֶךְ, using the Hifil עָבַד, “to cause to work” or to “enslave,” and פָּרַךְ, which in context, Propp observes, “connotes the abuse of slaves.”¹¹⁶ Exodus 1:14 adds detail, notes that the Egyptians embittered the Israelites' lives with hard labour in the field and in mortar and bricks, and describes the Israelites work as וַעֲבָדוּם אֲשֶׁר-עָבְדוּ בְהֵם בְּפָרֶךְ, again using עָבַד and פָּרַךְ as in v. 13. Qal עָבַד plus ב, like

50:36).

112. As Houtman notes (Houtman 1993 220).

113. On the meaning of וַעֲלֶה מִן-הָאָרֶץ, see Houtman 1993 240–241 and Propp 1999 131.

114. Propp notes that the exact meaning of סְבִלֹת is uncertain (Propp 1999 133).

115. Houtman comments that vv. 13–14 describes the “broadening and intensification” of Egyptian policy after v. 12 (Houtman 1993 249).

116. Propp 1999 134. פָּרַךְ appears only three other times in the Hebrew Bible, each time describing the treatment meted out to a slave; see Lv 25:43, 46, 53.

Moses recommends explaining this custom to an inquisitive son by answering that God had brought them out of Egypt, מִבֵּית עֶבְדִים (Ex 13:14). The first of the Ten Commandments highlights the centrality of this characterization of the Israelites' plight in Egypt: the Lord identifies himself as the God who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, מִבֵּית עֶבְדִים (Ex 20:2).

The Exodus narrative uses terms from עֶבֶד in ways that might refer either to work or servitude. Although Pharaoh orders the Israelites to leave (Ex 12:29–32), he and his courtiers have a change of heart when they hear that the Israelites have departed and wonder what they have done in sending the Israelites מֵעֶבְדָּנוּ, “out of our service.”¹²⁰ Later, when the Israelites are trapped between the Red Sea and Pharaoh's army, the frightened Israelites chastise Moses for having brought them out of Egypt to die, reminding him that they had told him to leave them alone so that they might serve the Egyptians (וְנַעֲבֹדָה אֶת-מִצְרַיִם, Ex 14:12). It would be better, they add, to serve the Egyptians (עֶבֶד אֶת-מִצְרַיִם, Ex 14:12) than to die in the desert.

Exodus presents a complicated picture of the Israelites' personal status. They can marry, as Amram does (Ex 2:2, 6:6), and Moses's request to Pharaoh that the Israelites leave with their young and old, and sons and daughters (Ex 10:9) suggests that they formed family units.¹²¹ Jacob and his family take their livestock with them to Egypt,¹²² and Moses asks for permission to depart with them (Ex 10:9, 29), which implies that

120. Ex 14:5 may reflect the realization that the Israelites had no intention of returning. In Ex 12:31, Pharaoh had directed the Jews to leave Egypt in order to worship (עֶבֶד) the Lord, as Moses had asked (Ex 5:1, cf. 3:18).

121. Cf. Pharaoh's permission to take out “dependents” (Ex 10:24).

122. Gn 45:10; 46:6; 47:1.

they still had private property. The Israelites have social relations with their Egyptian neighbors (Ex 3:22, 11:2, 12:35) and even have Egyptian lodgers (Ex 3:22).¹²³ However, the Israelites are also unfree and have no control over their labor. The Egyptians subject them to oppressive,¹²⁴ forced labor,¹²⁵ from which they cry out,¹²⁶ overseen by taskmasters¹²⁷ who beat them.¹²⁸ Although the Israelites have livestock and family units, they do not control them, but must seek Pharaoh's permission to take them to a religious festival,¹²⁹ permission which Pharaoh can grant or withhold.¹³⁰ The Israelites cannot even leave Egypt temporarily to worship their god without Pharaoh's consent.¹³¹ Perhaps all residents were subject to the same constraints: Joseph, "lord of all Egypt" (Gn 45:9), also has to ask Pharaoh's permission to go to Canaan to bury Jacob and return (Gn 50:4–6).

Genesis 15:14 and the Exodus account of the Israelites' departure from Egypt may imply that the Israelites were chattel slaves by echoing the Deuteronomic requirements for the freeing of a Hebrew slave. Deuteronomy specifies that a Hebrew

123. As Sarna notes (Sarna 1991 21).

124. The MT uses a range of terms: עני, Ex 3:7, 17; 4:31; לחץ, Ex 3:9; כאב, Ex 3:7; מרר, Ex 1:14.

125. Described as סבלת (Ex 1:11, 2:11, 5:4–5, 6:6–7) or עבדה (Ex 1:14, 2:23, 5:9, 5:11, 6:6, 6:9).

126. Expressed using זעק/שוע, Ex 2:23; באקה, Ex 2:24, 6:5; צעקה, Ex 3:7, 3:9.

127. Ex 1:11; 3:7; 5:6, 10, 13–14.

128. At least once, when Moses notices (Ex 2:11).

129. Ex 10:9, 10:26.

130. Ex 10:11, 10:24, 12:32.

131. At the burning bush, God directs Moses to ask Pharaoh for permission to make a three-day journey to worship him (Ex 3:18); this is Moses's first request of Pharaoh (Ex 5:1) and the subject of his wrangling with Pharaoh during the plagues (Ex 7:16, 26; 8:4, 16, 21–24; 9:1, 13, 28; 10:3, 7–11, 24–26.).

slave must not depart empty-handed, but must be provisioned from his master's "flock, threshing floor, and vat" (Dt 15:13–14, JPS). God blesses the master who follows these laws (Dt 15:18). In Gn 15:14, God notes that Abraham's descendants will leave the alien land which they serve with great wealth. Exodus picks up this theme. At the burning bush, God tells Moses that the Israelites will not depart Egypt empty-handed and that the Israelite women will borrow possessions from their Egyptian neighbors, thus stripping them (Ex 3:21–22). Before the tenth plague, Moses directs the Israelites to borrow silver and gold from their Egyptian neighbors (Ex 11:2–3). When Pharaoh finally dismisses the Israelites, he tells them to take their livestock and, oddly, asks for their blessing (Ex 12:31). The Israelites then depart with their cattle as well as Egyptian gold and silver (Ex 12:35–26). Thus, Daube argues, Pharaoh *malgré lui* frees the Israelites in the manner prescribed in Dt 15 by allowing them to depart with livestock and valuables, and requesting a blessing in return.¹³²

(b) Individual Slaves in the Patriarchal Era

In addition to foreshadowing the Jews' national servitude, Genesis depicts some of the Jews' individual ancestors as metaphorical or chattel slaves.

When Rebekah senses Jacob and Esau struggling in her womb, she seeks out God, who explains that she is carrying two nations, and predicts that one nation will be stronger than the other and that the older will serve (עבד) the younger (Gn 25:23). Subsequently, Isaac, deceived by Jacob and Rebekah, blesses Jacob and prays that nations will serve (עבד) him and that he will be master over his brothers (Gn 27:29). When Esau comes to Isaac for his blessing, Isaac realizes that he has blessed the wrong

132. Daube 1963 52–53, cf. 22–23, 86. Propp agrees (Propp 1999 411).

son and notes that he has given Jacob all of his brothers as slaves (עֶבְדִים, Gn 27:37). Isaac then blesses Esau and comments that he will serve (עבד) his brother Jacob (Gn 27:40).

God answers Rebekah in Gn 25:23 by speaking first of nations plural and then making “nation...nation” parallel with “older...younger,” which might suggest that עבד in these passages refers to political subjugation, not to chattel slavery. Genesis subsequently notes that Esau settled in Seir/Edom (Gn 32:4) and makes Esau the ancestor of the Edomites (Gn 36).

When describing Jacob’s marriages first to Leah and then to Rachel, Gn 29 reports that Laban provided each daughter with a שִׁפְחָה: Zilpah to Leah (Gn 29:24) and Bilhah to Rachel (Gn 29:29). Gn 29–30 describes Zilpah and Bilhah by name each as שִׁפְחָה, apart from Gn 30:3 where Leah calls Bilhah her אִמָּה, although the narrator describes her as שִׁפְחָה in the following verse.¹³³ They are collectively שִׁפְחוֹת when Jacob crosses the Jabbok ford (Gn 32:23) and when he encounters Esau (Gn 33:1–2, 6), but אִמָּהֹת when Laban searches Jacob’s tents (Gn 31:33). Legal texts which apply to male and female slaves employ אִמָּה and עֶבֶד whereas narratives discussing male and female slaves use שִׁפְחָה and עֶבֶד. This suggests that שִׁפְחָה and אִמָּה are synonyms for a female slave.¹³⁴

133. Zilpah as שִׁפְחָה: Gn 30:9, 10, 12, 18; 35:26; Bilhah as שִׁפְחָה: Gn 30:4, 7; 35:25.

134. Legal texts with אִמָּה and עֶבֶד: in Exodus: the Ten Commandments: Sabbath: Ex 20:10, and coveting: Ex 20:14; laws of slavery: Ex 21:7, 20, 26, 27, 32; in Leviticus: jubilee year: Lv 25:6; laws of slavery: Lv 25:44; in Deuteronomy: the Ten Commandments: Sabbath: Dt 5:14, and coveting: Dt 5:18; laws for offerings: Dt 12:12, 18; jubilee year: Dt 15:17; laws of Shavuot: Dt 16:11; laws of Sukkot: Dt 16:14. Narrative with שִׁפְחָה and עֶבֶד: Abraham: Gn 12:16, 24:35; Jacob: Gn 30:43, 32:46; Israelites to be offered for sale as slaves in case of disobedience: Dt 28:58. See also Wenham 2000 6.

Later narrative hints at enmity between the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah,¹³⁵ and Joseph, and highlights that they have slave mothers. Genesis 37:2 notes that Jacob brought a bad report about the children of Zilpah and Bilhah to Jacob after they tended the flocks together. The list of Jacobs' sons at the end of the independent narratives about Jacob describes Gad, Asher, Dan and Naphtali as the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, who were, it specifies, the slave-girls of Rachel and Leah (Gn 35:25–26). However, the last passage in Genesis that mentions Bilhah and Zilpah does not refer to them as slave girls (Gn 46:18, 25), and Jacob's prayers for their sons do not mention their mothers (Gn 49:1–27).

The account of Joseph, which runs from his birth in Gn 37 to his death at the end of Gn 50, comprises nearly a quarter of Genesis and is its longest narrative.¹³⁶ The migration of Jacob's family to Egypt begins the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in Gn 15, and Jacob's favored status, reversal of fortune, and subsequent restoration foreshadow the Israelites' servitude in Egypt and their liberation.

The central narrative element of the Joseph story is his enslavement, and Genesis repeatedly notes that Joseph was sold. Incensed at his dreams, Joseph's brothers plot to kill him when they see him coming out to the flocks (Gn 37:5–11). Instead, at Judah's suggestion, they sell him to a passing caravan of Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver (Gn 37:27–28).¹³⁷ Genesis 37:36 specifies that the Midianites—evidently the Ishmaelites

135. The sons of Zilpah: Gad and Asher (Gn 30:9–14). The sons of Bilhah: Dan and Naphtali (Gn 30:4–8).

136. Commentators note the narrative unity of Gn 37–50 and label it “a novella” (Gunkel 1997 382–387; Wenham 2000 344) or *belles lettres* (Westermann 1987 25–26.)

137. According to Lv 27:4, twenty shekels is the monetary equivalent of a 5–20 year-old

from vv. 25 and 27—sell Joseph to Potiphar, and Gn 39:1 notes that Potiphar bought Joseph from the Ishmaelites. When Joseph, now an important minister in Egypt, finally reveals himself to his brothers, he describes himself as the brother whom they had sold into Egypt (Gn 45:4–5).

Joseph thus became a chattel slave, and the narrative frequently refers to him as an עֶבֶד. Falsely accusing Joseph to her husband, Potiphar’s wife refers to him as הָעֶבֶד הַיְהוּדִי, “the Hebrew slave” (Gn 39:17), and the narrator subsequently notes that Potiphar’s wife described Joseph to Potiphar as עֶבְדְּךָ, “your slave” (Gn 39:19). When no Egyptian can interpret Pharaoh’s dreams (Gn 41:1–8), his cupbearer remembers the Hebrew youth, a slave (עֶבֶד) of the chief steward (Gn 41:12), who had interpreted dreams in prison.

(2) Servile Origins in the Rest of the Hebrew Bible

(a) National Servitude in Egypt

The Hebrew Bible outside of Genesis-Exodus often, but not uniformly, describes the Israelites’ oppression in Egypt as slavery. Echoing the language of Exodus,¹³⁸ several passages characterize Egypt as “the place of slavery” (בְּיַת עֶבְדִּים). The first commandment in Dt 5:6 reproduces Ex 20:2 verbatim: the Lord identifies himself as the god who took the people out of Egypt, the place of slavery. Moses subsequently reminds the people that God had freed them from בְּיַת עֶבְדִּים in his exhortations to keep the law in Dt 6–11 (Dt 5:6; 6:12; 7:8), in the law requiring death for prophets or dream diviners (Dt 13:6), and in the law for family members who advocate the worship of other gods (Dt

male.

138. Ex 13:3, 14; 20.2.

13:11).

Four passages from outside the Pentateuch also describe Egypt as **בְּיַת עֲבָדִים**. After Joshua's plea to cease worshipping other gods, the people reply that would never forsake the Lord who brought them and their fathers out of Egypt, the place of slavery (Josh 24:17). In Judges, when the Israelites cry out to God because of the hostility of the Midianites, God sends a prophet who begins his oracle: "Thus said the Lord: 'I brought you up out of Egypt...the place of slavery'" (Judg 6:8). Speaking through the prophet Micah, God tells the people that he brought them out of Egypt and redeemed them **מִבְּיַת עֲבָדִים** (Mic 6:4). When the people in Jerusalem repurchase Judean slaves that they had freed, thus violating their agreement with King Zedekiah, Jeremiah reminds the people of the commandment to free Judean slaves in the seventh year, a part of the covenant God made with the people when he brought them out of Egypt, the place of slavery (Jer 34:13).

The Hebrew Bible once describes the Israelites' plight in Egypt using the abstract noun **עֲבָדוּת**: in Nehemiah's reference to the people's complaints at the Red Sea (cf. Ex 14:11–12). In Neh 9:17, several Levites address God on a special penitential day and note that their fathers had been unmindful of him after the exodus and had wanted to return to their slavery (**עֲבָדָתָם**) in Egypt.

Passages in Leviticus and Deuteronomy describe the Israelites in Egypt as slaves. In Lv 26, after promising the people benefits for observing the law, the Lord identifies himself as the God who brought them out of the land of Egypt from being their slaves (**עֲבָדִים**; Lv 26:13). As Chapter 1 notes, Moses suggests in Dt 6 that a parent should answer a child's question about the meaning of the laws by replying **עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה**

בְּמִצְרַיִם, “we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt” (Dt 6:20).¹³⁹ Moses adjures the people to observe the laws of Shabbat (Dt 5:15); Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Weeks (Dt 16:12); slavery (Dt 15:15); and laws governing the treatment of widows and orphans (Dt 24:18, 22) by reminding them עָבַדְתָּ הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, “you were a slave in the land of Egypt.” Oddly, Moses presents slavery in Egypt as a potential consequence of transgression: if they violate the law, God will send the people back to Egypt where they will be forced to sell themselves as slaves, but will not find buyers (Dt 28:68). Deuteronomy and Leviticus also emphasize the centrality of slavery in Egypt to Israel’s relationship with God by describing God as the one who released them from servitude in Egypt.¹⁴⁰

Several passages in the Hebrew Bible outside of Genesis-Exodus, however, refer to the Israelites’ departure Egypt without mentioning slavery. 2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, and 1–2 Chronicles often refer to the exodus from Egypt, almost always using the same verbs found in the Exodus account, but never mention the Israelites’ servitude in Egypt.¹⁴¹

Epitomes of Israelite history in the Hebrew Bible frequently discuss the exodus from Egypt, sometimes at length and using the same verbs found in Gn 15 and Ex 1 to describe the Egyptians’s mistreatment of the Israelites, but many do not mention slavery.

139. Page 26.

140. Lv 26:13, Dt 5:6, 6:12, 8:14, 13:6, 13:11.

141. יָצָא-Qal: 1 Kg 6:1, 8:9; 2 Kg 21:15; יָצָא-Hifil 1 Kg 8:16, 51, 53, 9:9; 2 Chr 6:5, 7:22; also Dan 9:15; עָלָה-Hifil 2 Sam 7:6; 1 Kg 12:28; 2 Kg 17:7, 36; בָּוֹא-Qal: 2 Chr 20:10. A verb not in Exodus: פָּדָה-Qal: 1 Chr 17:21.

MT 1 Samuel never refers to slavery in Egypt, however the versions of 1 Sam 2:27 in the LXX and a Qumran fragment (4QSamA = 4Q51) include a reference to slavery in Egypt as McCarter and Butler note (McCarter Jr. 1980 87, Butler 1984 23).

When Samuel addresses the people at Mizpah, using language nearly identical to Judg 6:9 which describes Egypt as *בֵּית עֶבְדִים*, he reminds the people that he had delivered them from the hands of the Egyptians who had oppressed them (*Qal להז*, cf. Ex 3:9), but says nothing about slavery (1 Sam 10:18).¹⁴² Similarly, after Samuel accedes to the people's request for a king, he reminds them of the kindnesses God has done for them and describes how God had heard their forefathers cry out from oppression in Egypt, but does not mention slavery (1 Sam 12:7–12).¹⁴³ The book of Psalms never refers to the Israelites' slavery in Egypt—including Psalms 78, 135, and 136, which mention the exodus in summaries of Israelite history.¹⁴⁴ More striking are the omissions of slavery in Psalms 105 and 106, which treat the exodus tradition at length. Psalms 105:17–18 even describes Joseph as a fettered slave.

The creed that Dt 26 prescribes for recital at the festival of first fruits oddly fails to mention the Israelites' servitude in Egypt. After beginning “my father was a wandering Aramean” (Dt 26:5), the creed specifies that the Egyptians “did evil to us” (*רעע*), “oppressed us” (*ענה*), and set heavy labor (*עֲבֹדָה*) upon “us” (Dt 26:6). God saw “our” oppression (*ענה*), trouble (*עמל*), and pressure (*להז*, Dt 26:7) and brought the people out of Egypt with “a strong hand...an outstretched arm...great terror, and...signs and wonders” (Dt 26:8; JPS). This creed employs *ענה* from Gn 15:13, where it follows *עֲבָדִים*,

142. McCarter and Klein note the similarity to Judg 6:9, but neither comment on 1 Sam's omission of slavery.

143. MT 1 Sam 12:8 does not mention oppression, but both McCarter and Butler argue from the presence of *ἐταπείνωσεν αὐτοὺς Αἴγυπτος* in the LXX and the available space in 4QSam A (=4Q51) that a corresponding phrase has dropped out of the Hebrew (McCarter Jr. 1980 210; Klein 2000 111).

144. Daube, however suggests that the use of *צא* in Ps 81:6, 105:38, and 114:1 has the technical meaning of “release from slavery” (Daube 1963 31, 31 n. 9).

and from Ex 1:11, and the near synonyms רעע, עמל, and לחץ (Dt 26:6–7, cf Ex 3:9), along with “a strong hand” and “an outstretched arm,” both of which Exodus connects with slavery. Given Dt 6’s emphasis on teaching children that the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, it is strange that the creed in Dt 26 would underscore the Egyptians’ mistreatment of the Israelites, but not mention slavery.

Strikingly, Numbers never mentions the Israelites’ servitude in Egypt, despite containing several passages where one might expect it or which parallel a section of Exodus which mentions it. In Nu 20, Moses’s messengers recount the people’s history to the King of Edom, and mention that the Egyptians did evil to them (רעע) and that they cried out to God, who brought them out (Nu 20:14–16), but do not refer to slavery. In Exodus 14, the people complain to Moses at the Red Sea that they had told Moses to leave them alone so that they might serve (עבד) the Egyptians and say that it would be better to serve (עבד) the Egyptians than to die in the desert (Ex 14:11–12). Numbers contains four very similar passages, but none refer to slavery or service. After leaving Mt Sinai, the people grumble about their boring diet of manna (Nu 11:4–6), and God then directs Moses to tell the people that they will eat meat because they have been complaining that they were better off in Egypt (Nu 11:18). When the spies return with tales of the giants who inhabit the land, the people turn on Moses, lament that it would have been better to have died in Egypt (Nu 14:2), and twice comment that it would be better to return to Egypt (Nu 14:3–4).¹⁴⁵ In Nu 20, at the wilderness of Zin, the people complain about the lack of provisions and ask Moses why he had made them leave Egypt and come to such a wretched place (Nu 20:5). Similarly, after God helps them defeat the

145. Neh 9:17, which closely parallels Nu 14:4, does mention slavery.

King of Arad, the people travel along the Red Sea to avoid Edom and angrily ask God and Moses why they made them leave Egypt to die in the wilderness (Nu 21:5).

Ezekiel's alternative account of the exodus differs significantly from the version in Exodus and does not mention slavery.¹⁴⁶ Ignoring Gn 15, Ezekiel claims that God first revealed himself to the House of Jacob when they were already in Egypt and only then made an oath to take them from Egypt to a land flowing with milk and honey (Ezek 20:5–6).¹⁴⁷ Expanding the Exodus account, Ezekiel comments that God took the Israelites out of Egypt despite their failure to follow God's command to cast away the fetishes of Egypt (Ezek 20:7–9). Ezekiel does not mention the Israelites' servitude in its account of the exodus¹⁴⁸ or in any of his oracles against Egypt in Ezek 29–32.¹⁴⁹

(b) Individual Slaves in the Patriarchal Era

Passages outside the Pentateuch mention the characters Genesis links to servitude, but, with one exception, do not mention slavery. In his farewell speech, Joshua reminds the Israelites that God gave Esau the country of Seir (Josh 24:24), but does not mention the prediction that Esau would “serve” Jacob. Oracles against the Edomites in Jer 49, Obadiah and Mal 1 refer to Esau, but only as a metonym for the Edomites as a whole.¹⁵⁰ No passages outside the Pentateuch refer to Zilpah. The sole reference to

146. Block argues that Ezekiel 20 deliberately parodies the standard accounts (Block 1997 613–614).

147. See Greenberg 1983 364; Loewenstamm 1992 26 n. 6; Galambush 2001 548; Odell 2005 246;

148. As several scholars note: Blenkinsopp 1990 88–89; Patton 1996 77; Block 1997 627; Olley 2009 363.

149. Patton 1996 77.

150. On the relation between the oracles in Jer 49:7–23 and Obadiah, see Lundbom 2004 325; Keown et al. 1995 328; Stuart 1988 402. Edom is the subject of more hostile references to foreign nations than any other (Stuart 1988 404–406), but only the passages

Bilhah occurs in 1 Chr 7:13, which describes the sons of Naphtali as her descendants.

References to Joseph outside the Pentateuch are rare, but Ps 105 describes him as a slave.¹⁵¹ God caused a famine in the land (Ps 105:16) and sent ahead of them, meaning the Israelites, Joseph, “a man...sold into slavery” (Ps 105:17). He was fettered and placed in an iron collar (Ps 105:18). The imagery in Ps 105:18 might refer to Joseph’s status as a chattel slave or possibly to his imprisonment: Ps 105:20 notes that Pharaoh had him released.

(3) Servile Origins Outside the Hebrew Bible

Pre-second century CE Jewish literary sources from outside the Hebrew Bible take a range of approaches to the Genesis-Exodus tradition of the Jews’ national servitude and the servitude of individuals in the patriarchal era. The Septuagint versions of Genesis and Exodus, which were probably among the first Pentateuchal books translated, reveal how at least some Jews of the the second or third century BCE understood the references to slavery in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁵² Other extra-biblical sources treat the tradition of slavery in Egypt by omitting it in detailed accounts of the exodus story, deny it altogether, or strengthen it by portraying it as literal, chattel slavery. Texts which depict servile figures from the patriarchal era downplay their slavery or apologize for it by portraying them as truly free, and not slaves by nature.

in Jer 49, Obad, and Mal mention Esau.

151. 1 Chr 2:2 lists Jacob’s sons and 1 Chr 5:2 mentions Joseph’s birthright. All but one of the references in Nach use Joseph as a metonym for the tribe of Joseph (Ezek 47:13) or for the Israelites as a whole (Amos 6:6, Ps 80:2).

152. LXX Genesis was probably among the first books of the Pentateuch to be translated and was composed in the third or middle-second century BCE (Scarlata 2015 15–16). The composition of LXX Exodus dates to before the end of the third century BCE (Salvesen 2015 31).

(a) National Servitude

The translators of the LXX understood God’s promise to Abraham in Gn 15 and the Exodus account to refer to δουλεία. For the awkward אָהָבִים וְעָבְדוּם in Gn 15:13, the LXX uses καὶ δουλώσουσιν αὐτοὺς καὶ κακώσουσιν αὐτοὺς καὶ ταπεινώσουσιν αὐτοὺς, thereby aligning the subjects and objects of each verb, using δουλόω for Qal עָבַד as though the Hebrew had used Hiphil עָבַד,¹⁵³ and expanding וְעָבְדוּ into two verbs, κακώω and ταπεινώω. In Gn 15:14, the LXX renders וְעָבְדוּ with δουλεύω, “to serve as a slave,” which sharpens the sense of Qal עָבַד, preserves the subject of the Hebrew, and matches the sense of δουλόω from v. 13. Thus, in LXX Gn 15, God foretells that Abraham’s offspring will be enslaved as a collective in a foreign land.

The LXX version of Ex 1:11–12, which describes the Egyptian policy of oppression and its failure, echoes Gn 15 by rendering עָנָה by κακώω in Ex 1:11 and ταπεινώω in Ex 1:12. For verbs from עָבַד in Ex 1:13–14, the LXX employs καταδυναστεύω, “to oppress/dominate,” for Hifil עָבַד in v. 13 and καταδουλόω plus the accusative, “to enslave,” for Qal עָבַד plus ב in v. 14. This may reflect the tendency of LXX Exodus to vary its language by using different words in Greek to translate a single Hebrew term which appears twice in close succession.¹⁵⁴ The LXX also uses καταδυναστεύω in the laws of slavery in Ex 21 for Hitpael עָמַר to describe gaining possession of a fellow Jew or treating him like a slave in order to sell him.¹⁵⁵

In Ex 6, when God answers Moses’s lament after Pharaoh increases the Israelites’

153. As Jacobson also notes. The Targumim make the same adjustment (Jacobson 1996 403).

154. On this habit of LXX Exodus, see Wevers 1990 300 and *passim*.

155. Wevers 1990 330–331. Wevers comments that καταδυναστεύω is “more graphic” than Hifil עָבַד (Wevers 1990 6).

quota of bricks and withholds straw, the LXX translates מְעַבְדִים (Ex 6:5) with καταδουλώω and מְעַבְדָתָם (Ex 6:6) with ἐκ τῆς δουλείας, which adds precision to the MT's use of עֲבַד by clarifying that the Egyptians are enslaving the Israelites and that God will rescue them from slavery. Similarly, LXX Exodus translates every occurrence of מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים in apposition to Egypt as ἐξ οἴκου δουλείας, curiously taking the plural עֲבָדִים to mean the abstraction “slavery,” but translating מִבֵּית literally.¹⁵⁶ This became the standard rendering of מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים throughout the LXX.¹⁵⁷

When Pharaoh and his courtiers wonder what they have done in sending the Israelites out of their service (Ex 14:5), the LXX renders מְעַבְדֵנוּ as a clause: τοῦ μὴ δουλεύειν ἡμῖν, “so that they will not serve us as slaves.” At the Red Sea, the Israelites complain that they had asked Moses to leave them alone so that they could serve (עֲבַד) the Egyptians and add that it would be better to serve (עֲבַד) the Egyptians than to die in the desert (Ex 14:12). The LXX understands both phrases to refer to slavery and uses δουλεύω.

Extra-biblical sources take a range of approaches to the tradition of the Jews' servitude in Egypt. Several sources follow the Genesis-Exodus account and mention God's prediction to Abraham,¹⁵⁸ the Israelites' servitude in Egypt,¹⁵⁹ or both.¹⁶⁰ Other

156. Ex 13:3, 14; 20:2.

157. Wevers 1990 195–196.

158. *Apoc. Ab.* 32:1–4, Acts 7:6–7.

159. Temple Scroll = 11Q19 54:16–17; Jdt 5; Wis 19:14; 3 Mac 2:6; 4 *Ezra* 14:3; 2 *Bar.* 58:1; *m. Pes.* 10.5. 4Q158 frg. 1–2:17 adds a reference to slavery in its account of the burning bush.

160. *Jubilees* 14, 46, 48–49;

sources refer to the exodus from Egypt,¹⁶¹ report that God saved the Israelites,¹⁶² or allude to oppression in Egypt, but do not mention slavery.¹⁶³

More unusual are the extant fragments of Artapanus and Ezekiel the Tragedian, which treat the exodus at length, but never mention the Israelites' servitude. The first two fragments of Artapanus, which discuss Abraham, do not mention God's Gn 15 covenant with him.¹⁶⁴ Eusebius introduces the third fragment of Artapanus as an account of Moses (Eus. *P.E.* 9.27.1).¹⁶⁵ After the death of Abraham and his son, according to Artapanus, the king of the Egyptians also died and his son Palmanothes became king and treated the Jews badly (Artap. 3.1–2). Moses, reared by Chenephres's wife, the daughter of Palmanothes, became the teacher of Orpheus; invented machines, weapons, and philosophy; organized the country into nomes; assigned gods for worship; and was widely loved (Artap. 3.3–6). Out of jealousy, Cenephres tried to eliminate Moses by sending him on campaign to Ethiopia (Artap. 3.7–10) and then by plotting his assassination (Artap. 3.11–18). Chenephres ordered the Jews to wear linen instead of wool so he could identify and harass them, and died of elephantiasis as a result (Artap. 3.20). Moses prayed to God to stop the people's sufferings, and God spoke to him from a bush ordering him to wage war against Egypt, and to rescue the Jews (διασῶζω) and lead them to their ancient fatherland (Artap. 3.21). When Cenephres's successor asked Moses why he returned to Egypt from Arabia, where he had fled, Moses answered that God had

161. *Sib. Or.* 3.255; *Bar* 1:19–20; 2:11.

162. *Apoc. Zeph.* 6.10; *Jude* 5.

163. *En.* 89:15; *3 Bar.* 3:5; *4 Bar.* 6:23; *T. Jos.* 20:1

164. For Artapanus's account of Abraham, see section A3b page 69 f.

165. Holladay, citing Mras, argues that the Eusebius composed the chapter headings in *P.E.* and that they are an intrinsic part of the work (Holladay *FHJA* I:13).

ordered him to release the Jews (ἀπολύω; Artap. 3.22). Although the new king was impressed by Moses's wonderful deeds and promised to release the people (ἀπολύω; Artap. 3.29), he became arrogant and maltreated the Jews with every kind of vengeance and chastisement (Artap. 3.31).¹⁶⁶ The king eventually released the Jews (ἀπολύω; Artap. 3.34), but then pursued them and perished in the Red Sea (Artap. 3.35–37).¹⁶⁷ Thus, although Artapanus, who probably worked from the LXX,¹⁶⁸ mentions the Egyptian king's mistreatment of the Jews (Artap. 3.2, 20, 31) and their suffering (Artap. 3.21), he does not report their compulsory labor or servitude. This is unlikely to be an artifact of Artapanus's two-step transmission by Polyhistor and Eusebius or Clement.¹⁶⁹ It is, however, consistent with Artapanus's portrait of Joseph which omits his sale as a slave.¹⁷⁰

Although Ezekiel the Tragedian may have mentioned the Jews' servitude in parts of *Exagoge* which do not survive, none of the extant fragments refer to slavery in Egypt— including sections which recount Ex 1 and Ex 14. The first 13 lines of Moses's opening monologue recapitulate Ex 1. When Jacob left Canaan and went to Egypt (Ezek.

166. In Clement of Alexandria, Cenephres is Moses's opponent in this part of Artapanus's account (Clem. *Strom.* 1.23.154.1).

167. The Memphians claim that Moses crossed the Red Sea at low tide (Artap. 3.35), but may not have mentioned Egyptians' pursuit and subsequent destruction.

168. Holladay *FHJA* I: 192; Collins *OTP* II: 894.

169. Eusebius and Clement both appear to follow Polyhistor's order of presentation, which suggests that they adhered to his text. (Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.1: 510–511). Eusebius introduces Artapanus's third fragment by citing Polyhistor explicitly and, evidently, reproducing his text (Eus. *P.E.* 9.25.4, 27.1). Polyhistor wrote geographic or ethnographic works by compiling extracts from other authors (Jacoby *FGrH* IIIa Nr. 262–296 *Kommentar* 255; Holladay *FHJA* I: 8; Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.1: 510; Strugnell *OTP* II:778). Polyhistor's taste for *thaumasta* (Phot. *Bibl.* 188 p 145 b9 = *FGrH* 273 F82) might suggest that he would have cited a passage about Jews' national servitude had Artapanus mentioned it.

170. See Chapter 2 B3b page 113.

Trag. 1–2), Moses reports, he fathered a great people that has been badly (κακῶς) treated and oppressed (4). “Until this very time,” they have been ill-treated (κακῶω, 5) by evil (κακός, 6) men and the hand of the dynasty. Because Pharaoh saw the people multiplying, he contrived a great deceit and maltreated the people with brickwork and palace building (8–10). Ezekiel’s use of κακῶω and cognates three times in lines 4–6 echoes its use in LXX Gn 15:13, which mentions slavery, and Ex 1:11. Notably, Ezekiel’s account of Ex 1:1–14 refers to maltreatment and brickwork, but omits slavery.¹⁷¹

Ezekiel’s subsequent account of the events at the Red Sea also omits the Israelites’ complaint to Moses in Ex 14:11–12 that it would have been better to remain in Egypt and serve the Egyptians as slaves.¹⁷² In *Exagoge*, an Egyptian messenger reports that the people cried out in tears to heaven upon seeing the Egyptian army and raised their voice to their ancestral God (210–213).

Although Ezekiel does not mention the Jews’ servitude to the Egyptians, he modifies a line from the LXX account of the burning bush to have God describe the Israelites as his slaves. Instead of God’s comment in Ex 3:9 that he has seen the oppression of his people (ιδὼν εἶδον τὴν κάκωσιν τοῦ λαοῦ μου), in line 108 God says that he has seen the suffering of his slaves (ιδὼν κάκωσιν καὶ πόνον δούλων ἐμῶν, 108). Exodus never describes the Israelites as the slaves of God,¹⁷³ although the idea appears in

171. Jacobson oddly fails to notice the omission of slavery, but comments that Ezekiel deliberately omits Joseph’s and the Jews’ good fortune to avoid undermining the image of the Jews as “the oppressed and *enslaved*” (emphasis added; Jacobson 1983 74).

172. As Jacobson and Holladay also comment (Jacobson 1983 155; Holladay *FHJA* II: 501).

173. As Jacobson notes (Jacobson 1983 107). In Ex 32:13, Moses asks God to remember his slaves/servants (οικέτης) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Daube argues that the Israelites’

the law for the release of slaves in Lv 25 and in Moses’s farewell speech in Dt 32.¹⁷⁴ Ezekiel’s willingness to describe the Israelites as God’s slaves might suggest that his omission of the Israelites’ servitude to the Egyptians in *Exagoge*’s versions of Ex 1 and 14 is deliberate.

The Gospel of John, which Millar emphasizes reflects “the real world of first-century Palestine,” appears to take a unique approach to the Exodus tradition by having the Jews deny that they have ever been slaves.¹⁷⁵ In Jesus’s sixth dialog in Jn 7–8 (Jn 8:21–30), Jesus tells the Jews who had believed in him that, if they remain in his word, they will know the truth and the truth will set them free (Jn 8:30–32). Jesus’s Jewish listeners reply that they are the descendants of Abraham (σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ) and have never served anyone as slaves (δουλεύω; Jn 8:33). Jesus answers that everyone who sins is a slave to sin and that whomever the son frees is truly free (Jn 8:34–36). He also acknowledges that they are the descendants of Abraham (σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ; Jn 8:37). The use of σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ in Jn 8:31 and 8:37 echoes its use in LXX Gn 15:13 where God tells Abraham that his descendants (τὸ σπέρμα σου) will be enslaved.¹⁷⁶ Because Jesus’s Jewish audience is frequently puzzled by his teaching in the sixth dialog and elsewhere, their reply in Jn 8:31 might mean, very paradoxically, that they—meaning their ancestors—had not been enslaved in Egypt.¹⁷⁷ However, the Jews’ claim may function as

transformation from being the slaves of the Egyptians to the slaves of God is one of the main motifs of Exodus (Daube 1963 42–46).

174. Cf. Lv 25:42, 55; Dt 32:36.

175. See Chapter 1 page 30 n. 69.

176. Commentators not noting this similarity include Dodd 1953, Dodd 1963, Brown 1966, Barrett 1978, Brodie 1993, Beasley-Murray 1999, and Keener 2003.

177. The Jews are puzzled in the sixth dialogue (Jn 8:22, 25, 27), in the seventh dialogue

a paradox because the author of John could expect his audience to know Gn 15 and the exodus story.

Although Exodus depicts the Israelites as subject to unfree, forced labour, which it characterizes as slavery, two first century CE sources, Philo and *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, go a step further and portray the Israelites as actual or potential *chattel* slaves.¹⁷⁸ Both sources appear sensitive to the Israelites' (potential) status as chattel slaves: Philo emphasizes that their enslavement was unjust and unnatural, and was an offense against the sanctity of suppliants; *LAB* reports that the Israelites were enslaved when they arrived Egypt and that the Egyptians planned to use female Israelite infants for slave breeding.

In *Life of Moses*, Philo reports that Moses's ancestors had migrated to Egypt because of a famine in Babylon (*Mos.* 1.5) and comments that, as strangers who had fled to Egypt to escape a famine, the Jews were in a sense suppliants who had taken refuge in the country as in a holy asylum seeking protection (*Mos.* 1.34). Philo stresses that strangers *must* be regarded (γραφέσθωσαν) as the suppliants of those who receive them, using a third-person imperative for special, almost legal emphasis (*Mos.* 1.35). Instead, the ruler of the country enslaved (ἀνδραποδίζω) these men, who had left their own home and come to Egypt as to a second fatherland seeking safety, as though they were captives

(Jn 8:51–53, 56–58), in the second dialogue (Jn 7:33–35), and elsewhere (Jn 2:20; 6:41, 52). Being “born from above” confuses Nicodemus, see Jn 3:3–4. On the motif of misunderstanding in John, see Brown 2003 288–290.

Keener comments that the Jews' claim in Jn 8:31 must mean that they had never been slaves personally, or, anticipating Jn 8:34, must mean that descent from Abraham *ipso facto* ensures that they are not slaves to sin (Keener 2003 749–751).

178. On the dating of *LAB*, see page 75 n. 100 above.

(αἰχμάλωτος) enslaved by the laws of war or home-born slaves (οἰκότριψ) purchased from their masters (*Mos.* 1.36). He also violated their rights as suppliants, thereby showing no regard for the god of free men, suppliants, strangers, and the hearth, who is their guardian (*Mos.* 1.36). The Egyptians set the Israelites severe labors beyond their powers so that the Israelites began to die from exhaustion and their corpses were thrown away unburied (*Mos.* 1.37–39). Thus, the impious Egyptians threatened to extend their slave-mastery (δεσποτεία) to the un-enslaved (ἄδούλωτος) passions of the soul, which nature has made free (*Mos.* 1.39).

Philo also depicts the Israelites as free men unjustly made chattel slaves in his account of their departure from Egypt. As the Hebrews were being driven out of Egypt, they came to a notion of their own noble-birth (εὐγένεια; *Mos.* 1.140) and dared, as was reasonable for free men, to carry out spoils with them as some recompense for their enslavement (καταδουλόω; *Mos.* 1.141). This was proper because the Egyptians had begun the unjust acts by enslaving suppliants and strangers in the manner of captives (αἰχμάλωτος) taken in war (*Mos.* 1.142).

Life of Moses goes beyond Exodus in using very specific language to portray the Israelites as literal, chattel slaves, and echoes Aristotle's *Politics* to clarify that they were *not* slaves by nature, but were unjustly enslaved. Philo describes the Egyptian ruler's treatment of the Hebrews using ἀνδραποδίζω (*Mos.* 1.36), which in prose refers to the sale into chattel slavery of those conquered in war.¹⁷⁹ Comparing the Israelites to enslaved war captives (αἰχμάλωτος; *Mos.* 1.36, 142) and home-born slaves (οἰκότριβες) bought from a master (*Mos.* 1.36) underscores the Israelites' status as chattel slaves. By

179. LSJ s.v. ἀνδραποδίζω I. Less commonly, ἀνδραποδίζω can refer to kidnapping.

describing the Israelites as noble and free men (*Mos* 1.140) enslaved according to the laws of war (αἰχμάλωτος; *Mos*. 1.36, cf. 142), Philo specifically echoes Aristotle's comments in *Politics* I.6 that the nobly-born are naturally free and that it is unjust for them to be enslaved in war¹⁸⁰

Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum's radically different version of Ex 1–2 reports that the Egyptians planned to use the Israelites' female infants to breed with their chattel slaves and then suggests that the Israelites had already been slaves for many years. *LAB* 9.1 opens by closely following Ex 1:6–10a: after Joseph's death a new Egyptian king arises (cf. Ex 1:8) and, frightened at the Israelite numbers (cf. Ex 1:7), proposes to his people that they hatch a plan to prevent them from increasing further (cf. Ex 1:9–10a). Rather than forcing the Israelites into compulsory labour (cf. Ex 1:11, 13–14), the Egyptian king proposes killing their male infants by throwing them into the Nile (cf. Ex 1:22). Breaking with the Exodus account, *LAB* has the Egyptians answer the king and pledge to kill the males, but to keep the females in order to give them to their slaves (*servus*) as wives (*LAB* 9.1). In this way, anyone born from those unions will be a slave (*servus*) and will serve the Egyptians as slaves (*servire*; *LAB* 9.1).¹⁸¹

The Israelite elders gather the people and propose that the Israelites no longer have sex with their wives lest the fruit of their wombs be defiled and their children serve idols (*LAB* 9.2), but ignore the proposal to use their female children for slave breeding. Amram, previously unmentioned, argues that God will never let the Israelites die out and

180. See the discussion of Aristotle's theory of natural slavery in Chapter 6 A1, page 234 ff.

181. *Exod. Rab.* 1.18 comments that, because of their excessive concupiscence, the Egyptians proposed to kill the males so that they could keep the females as wives (Perrot et al. 1976 102; Jacobson 1996 401).

cites God's covenant with Abraham—which *LAB* omits (cf. *LAB* 8.1)—as evidence that God had intended the Israelites to suffer 400 years of slavery (*servitus*; *LAB* 9.3). He will therefore ignore the elders' decision and have sex with his wife to increase the nation because God would not forsake Israel or forget his covenant (*LAB* 9.4).¹⁸² Oddly, Amram comments that God had spoken to Abraham 350 years ago and that the Israelites have been slaves (*servus*) in Egypt for 130 years (*LAB* 9.3).

The plan to use infant Israelite girls for slave breeding with the Egyptians' own slaves concretely links the Israelites with chattel slavery. Amram's argument that the Israelites should not protest the Egyptians' policy of slave breeding by practicing celibacy because God had foreseen 400 years of slavery suggests that he has chattel slavery in mind when he notes that the Israelites have been slaves for 130 years (*LAB* 9.3). Because the Israelites dwell in Egypt for 210 years (*LAB* 8.14) and Moses will be 80 when they depart (*LAB* 53.2, cf. Ex 7:7), Amram appears to claim that the Israelites were made chattel slaves upon their arrival in Egypt, 130 years previously.¹⁸³

182. In later rabbinic sources, Amram advocates celibacy (Feldman 1971 xci).

183. This in turn implies that Jacob and Joseph died when Jacob came to Egypt, which is inconsistent with Gn 47:28's report that Jacob lived in Egypt for 17 years.

Amram's claims in *LAB* 9.3 seem to be a deliberate attempt to preserve the figures for the Israelites' slavery from *both* Gn 15:13 (400 years) and Ex 12:40–4 (430 years; cf. Jacobson 1996 406–407). *LAB* 9.3 explicitly cites the figure of 400 years. However, if God spoke to Abraham 350 years earlier (*LAB* 9.3) and the Israelites depart Egypt when Moses is 80 (*LAB* 53.2), that adds to 430 years in Egypt. Separately, Amram's claim that the Jews have already been slaves for 130 years is consistent with *LAB* 53.2's comment that Moses was 80 when the Israelites departed Egypt and *LAB* 8.14's report that the Israelites dwelt in Egypt for 210 years.

(b) Individual Slaves in the Patriarchal Era

Most post-biblical sources treat Esau briefly and omit mention of his future servitude to Jacob.¹⁸⁴ Jubilees omits God's prediction to Rebekah that the older son will serve the younger, but includes a reference to Esau's servitude in Isaac's blessing.¹⁸⁵ Later rabbinic sources interpret Edom, Esau's descendants according to Gn 32 and 36, as Rome, but this was not a feature of Second Temple literature.¹⁸⁶

Philo goes beyond the Genesis account in *Legum Allegoria* and explicitly describes Esau as an Aristotelian slave by nature.¹⁸⁷ Philo cites Jacob and Esau as examples of people whom God moulds well and assigns a good inheritance before their birth (*Leg* 3.85): when the two brothers were still in the womb, Jacob was a ruler, leader, and master (δεσπότης), but Esau was a subject and a slave (δοῦλος; *Leg*. 3.88). This explains God's answer to Rebecca in Gn 25:23—which Philo cites—that two nations were in her womb and that the elder would serve (δουλεύω) the younger. For, according to God, the base and unreasoning person is by nature a slave (φύσει...δοῦλος), but the beautiful, rational, and good person is a ruler and free (*Leg*. 3.89). Elsewhere, Philo notes that a certain kind of affliction can be beneficial. Even slavery (δουλεία), the most abject form of affliction, is thought a great good, and this is what Isaac prayed for his son Esau when telling him that he would serve (δουλεύω) Jacob (*Congr.* 175–176). Isaac judged that being a subject, serving as a slave (δουλεύω), and obeying the commands of

184. Dem. 2.1; *LAB* 8.4–5; 4 *Ezra* 3:16; Aris. Ex. 1.1;

185. Rebekah's pregnancy: *Jub.* 19:10–14; Isaac's blessing of Esau: *Jub.* 26:33–34.

186. *Y. Ta'an.* 1.1 contains two interpretations of Isa. 21:11 which link Seir with Rome, both by mid-second century CE Tannaim (R. Meir and R. Simeon b. Yohai). See also Hübner 1992 and Avishur et al. 2007.

187. Philo had read at least some Aristotle or a paraphrase; see *Aet.* 1.10, 12, 16, 18. On Aristotle's theory of natural slavery, see Chapter 6 A1, page 234 ff. below.

the lover of wisdom was a great benefit to the person who preferred war to peace because of the disorder in his soul (*Congr.* 176).¹⁸⁸ Philo's description of Esau as a slave by nature (φύσει...δοῦλος) directly borrows the terminology of Aristotle's *Politics* book I, and Philo's comment that slavery is beneficial to a (natural) slave specifically echoes *Politics* I.5–6.

Although several sources follow Genesis in describing Zilpah and Bilhah as slaves,¹⁸⁹ a few do not, perhaps because of the brevity of their accounts: *LAB* 8:6 describes them as concubines¹⁹⁰ and Theodotus simply omits them (Theod. F3). *Testament of Naphtali*, however, embroiders Genesis by describing Zilpah and Bilhah as sisters whose illustrious father was related to Abraham.¹⁹¹ *T. Naph.* 1:9–10 reports that Bilhah's father Rotheos was from Abraham's γένος, a Chaldean, a God-fearer, and was both free and well-born. Rotheos was taken captive and bought by Laban, and then given Laban's slave-girl Aina, who bore him Zilpah then Bilhah (*T. Naph.* 1:10–11).¹⁹² *Testament of Naphtali* thus eliminates any possible servile stain on Zilpah and Bilhah or their offspring. Rotheos's free and noble birth makes his servitude unjust, according to the ideology of Aristotle, and may suggest that Zilpah and Bilhah are themselves noble

188. Elsewhere, Philo associates Esau with foolishness (*Sacr.* 17), wickedness (*Sacr.* 120, 135, *Det.* 45), shameful deeds (*Migr.* 153), ignorance (*Fug.* 42), and imperfection (*Mut.* 230).

189. *Jub.* 28; *T. Benj.* 1:3; *Dem.* 2:3–4; Philo *Leg.* 2.94, 3.136; *Congr.* 30, 33.

190. Jacobson oddly comments that *LAB* does not upgrade their status (Jacobson 1996 391). Other commentaries are silent on the omission of their servitude (Feldman 1971 xc; Perrot et al. 1976 99–100; Murphy 1993 51).

191. Jubilees makes Zilpah and Bilhah sisters (*Jub.* 28:9), but describes them as slaves.

192. According to 4Q215, perhaps a version of *T. Naph.*, Zilpah and Bilhah's father, possibly named Ahiyot, was given Hannah as a wife by Laban (4Q215 F1:1–5).

and, therefore, not natural slaves.¹⁹³

Zilpah and Bilhah's servile status might have been a continuing stain on their sons, whose descendants became four of the twelve tribes of Israel. *Joseph and Aseneth*, Philo, and *Liber Biblicarum Antiquitatum*, in different ways, share a concern with the servile origins of Zilpah and Bilhah's sons.

Joseph and Aseneth makes the servile origin of Zilpah and Bilhah the cause of hostility between Joseph and Aseneth, and their sons. When Joseph and Aseneth return from visiting Jacob (*Jos. Asen.* 22:2–9), the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah, whom the narrator identifies as the παιδίσσαι of Leah and Rachel, do not escort them back to their house because they envy and hate them (22:2–9). Subsequently, when Pharaoh's son is lovesick over Aseneth and fails to persuade Simeon and Levi to kill Joseph (23), his servants suggest that he enlist the aid of the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah, Leah's and Rachel's παιδίσσαι, because they envy and hate Joseph and Aseneth (24:2). Pharaoh's son tells Zilpah and Bilhah's sons that Joseph had vowed to destroy them and their offspring so that they would not inherit with him because they were the children of the παιδίσσαι (24:8). Although the narrator notes that Pharaoh's son was lying (24:7), Zilpah and Bilhah's sons are distressed, and Dan and Gad agree to ambush Aseneth and kill Joseph (24:12–14). Although Aseneth escapes the ambush (26:5), the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah try again to kill Aseneth, but she prays to God, and their swords turn to ashes

193. The account of Hagar and Ishmael in Gn 21 implies that Ishmael was a legitimate heir to Abraham, thus perhaps not a slave, as long as Abraham *considered* him to be a legitimate heir. See Hezser 2005 192. On the traits which distinguish a person as not a slave by nature, see page 237 f. below.

(27:7–11). Aseneth magnanimously offers to protect them from the wrath of their brothers (28:7) and, when the other brothers come to kill the sons of their father’s παιδίσκαι (28:9), she persuades them to desist because Zilpah and Bilhah’s sons are their brothers and their father’s blood (28:11).

Philo demonstrates anxiety about the partly servile origins of the children of Zilpah and Bilhah when addressing Jews and when addressing a broader audience. In *Life of Moses*, intended for a mixed audience, Philo reports that Moses prophesied to each tribe (*Mos.* 2.288; cf. Dt 33) and comments that it was very fitting that people differing in their birth or origins and very much in their descent on the mother’s side should receive a collection of oracles as a sort of inheritance (*Mos.* 2.289).

In *Legum Allegoria*, aimed at a Jewish audience, Philo explicitly contrasts the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah, whom he labels νόθοι (born to a slave or concubine, hence “illegitimate”), with the sons of Leah and Rachel, whom he calls γνήσιοι (belonging to the γένος, born in wedlock, hence “legitimate”). Commenting on Jacob’s blessing of Dan (cf. Gn 49), Philo notes that Issachar is Jacob’s fifth γνήσιος son by Leah, unless one counts the sons of Zilpah, in which case he is Jacob’s seventh son (*Legum.* 2.94). Philo twice explains the meaning of Gn 37:2, which describes Joseph’s flock-tending with the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah and the bad report he made about them to Jacob, by emphasizing the lower status of Joseph’s νόθοι brothers. In *Deus*, Philo illustrates the second sort of generation/creation, that of the change from a higher genus to a lower form, by commenting that Moses had this distinction in mind in Gn 37:2 (*Deus* 119).¹⁹⁴ Moses specified that Joseph was not with his γνήσιοι brothers, but with his νόθοι

194. The first kind of generation/creation is from non-existence to existence; see *Deus.* 119.

brothers, who were named from the worse origin, that of the women (i.e. Zilpah and Bilhah) and not from the better, that of the men, in order to give the clearest account of Joseph's character (*Deus* 121). Elsewhere, Philo explains that Gn 37:2 describes Joseph as “young,” because he was not yet ready to be a shepherd with his γνήσιοι brothers, who are able to control the unreasoning nature of the soul; instead, Joseph had to tend the flocks with the νόθοι, who honor things which only appear to be good (*Sobr.* 12, 14).¹⁹⁵

Philo's concern with Zilpah and Bilhah's origins extends beyond their sons to the Israelite tribes composed of their descendants: Philo questions whether νόθοι offspring are proper members of the kinship line and can share in the ancestral inheritance. Commenting on Gn 25:25–26's report that Abraham gave Isaac all that he owned, but gave his children by concubines gifts and sent them eastwards, Philo notes that small and great blessings fall to the γνήσιος, but small things only to the νόθος (*Migr.* 94). Philo explains God's promise to Abraham to give him a son by Sarah (Gn 17:16), by commenting that only a γνήσιος can be “descendant of a citizen-soul” and contrasts a γνήσιος with a child who is an alien, brought in by stealth, adopted, or a νόθος (*Mut.* 147).¹⁹⁶

A concern for the legitimacy of the Israelite descendants of Zilpah and Bilhah's sons underlies apologetic comments about them in *Exposition*. Without identifying any

195. Gn 37:2 does not describe Joseph as “young” (νέος), but specifies that he was 17 years old.

196. The precise import of ἀστῆς ψυχῆς ἔγγονον is unclear, but it may include the idea of offspring with civil rights. Colson glosses the second part of the sentence: “the truly genuine and free-natured offspring of a free-born soul” (Colson, LCL). Cf. Philo's comment that, unlike other nations, Jewish men are forbidden from using prostitutes, but must remain pure and marry virgins in order to produce γνήσιοι (*Ios.* 43; cf. *Mos.* 1.28).

of the characters by name, Philo suggests that Zilpah and Bilhah, although slaves, were almost equal to their mistresses (*Virt.* 223). Their νόθοι children differed in no way from the γνήσιοι, because their father thought well of his children from different mothers, and because their step-mothers changed their hatred into concern (*Virt.* 224). The brothers, although having only half of their γένος in common, held a double measure of affection for each other (*Virt.* 225). Betraying possible anxiety about the origins of the four of the Israelite tribes descended from Zilpah and Bilhah, Philo comments that the chieftains of the twelve Israelite tribes shared not only συγγένεια, but the more genuine (γνησιωτέρα) connection of sharing the same father (*Praem.* 57).

Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum seems to imply that the Israelite descendants of Zilpah and Bilhah's children had servile tendencies. In Ex 14, when the Israelites are trapped between the Red Sea and Pharaoh's advancing army, the people are afraid, cry out to God (Ex 14:10), and tell Moses that it would have been better to serve the Egyptians as slaves than to die in the wilderness (Ex 14:12). In *LAB*, by contrast, the frightened Israelites (*LAB* 10.2) split into three groups of four tribes, each with a different plan. While the tribes of Reuben, Issachar, Zebulun, and Simeon propose giving themselves up, and the tribes of Levi, Judah, Joseph, and Benjamin propose resistance, the tribes of Gad, Asher, Dan, and Naphtali—the offspring of Bilhah and Zilpah—recommend returning to Egypt and serving the Egyptians as slaves (*servare*, *LAB* 10.3). Although *LAB* describes Zilpah and Bilhah as concubines (*LAB* 8:6) and never as slaves, a reader familiar with Genesis might well have concluded that the descendants of

Joseph's slave wives had servile natures.¹⁹⁷

Many extra-biblical texts that mention Joseph follow the account in Genesis and report that he was sold as a chattel slave.¹⁹⁸ *Testament of Zebulun* hints that Joseph's true status as a free person would have been obvious to a potential buyer and reports that his brothers dressed him in the old cloak of a slave before they sold him (*T. Zeb.* 4:10). *Testament of Joseph* and Philo go further and soften the account of Joseph's chattel slavery by emphasizing that he possessed the qualities of a free man and was recognizably not a slave by origin, but well-born. Artapanus and *LAB*, by contrast, may deliberately omit Joseph's servitude.

Characters in *Testament of Joseph*, which presents itself as a first-person account, frequently recognize that Joseph is really a free man, but Joseph either claims to be a slave or remains silent. Joseph comments that he remained silent when he was sold rather than telling the Ishmaelites that that he was the son of a great and powerful man (*T. Jos.* 10:3). While traveling to Egypt, the Ishmaelites repeatedly ask Joseph if he is a slave, but when Joseph replies that he *is* a slave, the Ishmaelites comment that his appearance makes clear that he is *not* a slave (*T. Jos.* 11:2–3). When Joseph replies to Pentephres's query and claims to be a slave bought by the Ishmaelites, Pentephres concludes that Joseph is lying and has him whipped (*T. Jos.* 13:6–9). Pentephres's wife

197. Jacobson speculates that *LAB* 10.3 reflects a concern with intermarriage (Jacobson 1996 437). Murphy suggests *servare* refers to idol worship (Murphy 1993 63, 63 n. 33). None of the commentaries link *LAB* 10.3 with Zilpah and Bilhah's slave status (cf. Feldman 1971 xcic; Perrot et al. 1976 108–109).

198. *Jub.* 34:11, 46:3, cf. 39:10; Dem. F2; *T. Naph.* 7:4; *T. Gad.* 1:8, 2:3, 5:11; *T. Zeb.* 2:9, 3:1, 4:4–5, 10; *T. Dan.* 1:4; *Jos. Asen.* 4:9, 24:9, 25:6; Acts 7:9.

asks her husband why he has punished and confined a stolen free man who is well-born (*T. Jos.* 14:1–3). Upon their return to Egypt, the Ishmaelites, who had learned of Jacob’s mourning for Joseph, tell Joseph that they now know that he is the son of a great man and ask why he had told them that he was a slave (*T. Jos.* 15:2).

Philo’s *Life of Joseph*, part of *Exposition*, reports that Joseph was sold as a slave,¹⁹⁹ but repeatedly emphasizes in the terminology of Aristotle that Joseph was well-born, wise, noble, and not a slave by nature. In contrast to Gn 37:3, which explains that Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons because he was the child of his old age, Philo notes that Jacob loved Joseph for his noble spirit (φρόνημα εὐγενές; *Ios.* 4). Once he was in Potiphar’s house, Joseph proved that he had a noble character (καλοκάγαθία) and was well-born (εὐγένεια; *Ios.* 37). In jail, Joseph amazes the other prisoners by the greatness of his virtue (ἀρετῆς μέγεθος; *Ios.* 80) and impresses the jailers by his noble character (καλοκάγαθία; *Ios.* 85). The example of Joseph’s moderation and every virtue (σωφροσύνη καὶ πᾶσα ἀρετή; *Ios.* 87) causes the other prisoners to reproach themselves for their past. When Joseph is brought before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams, Pharaoh, who is more than usually perceptive, immediately recognizes that Joseph is both free and well-born (ἐλεύθερος καὶ εὐγενής), and comments to himself on Joseph’s signs of wisdom (σοφία; *Ios.* 106). After hearing Joseph’s interpretation of his dreams, Pharaoh, tells Joseph that he is the man of prudence and wisdom (φρόνιμος, συνετός; *Ios.* 117) who can prepare for the famine and makes Joseph his deputy. The narrator then notes that no one would have expected a person to change from slave to master in a single day (*Ios.* 123), but adds that, although God can do what he wills, such a person must have a

199. Reporting Joseph’s sale: narrator: *Ios.* 15 (twice), 16, 22, 165, 167, 175, 250, 270; brothers: 18, 20 (twice), 247; Joseph himself: 238.

spark of noble character (καλοκάγαθία; *Ios.* 124). Subsequently, Joseph's brothers praise him for saying nothing about his noble birth (εὐγένεια) and noble descent (εὐπατρίδης), or saying that he was not a slave by nature (οὐ φύσει δοῦλος; *Ios.* 248). In the encomium, Philo praises Joseph for his beauty, wisdom (φρόνησις), and power of reasoning or words (λόγων δύναμις; *Ios.* 268).

Philo's account of Joseph echoes Aristotle's account of natural slavery throughout. As Chapter 6 A1 will clarify,²⁰⁰ Aristotle highlights three qualities that distinguish someone who is *not* by nature a slave: reason (λόγος),²⁰¹ virtue (ἀρετή), and noble birth (εὐγένεια).²⁰² *Life of Joseph* repeatedly emphasizes Joseph's virtue,²⁰³ his wisdom,²⁰⁴ his noble origins,²⁰⁵ and that Joseph was really free.²⁰⁶ Joseph's brothers' claim that Joseph was no slave by nature (*Ios.* 248) explicitly echoes Aristotle and suggests that Philo deliberately set out to contrast Joseph with Aristotle's natural slave.

Artapanus also echoes Aristotle and deliberately modifies the account of Gn 37 to omit Joseph's sale to the Ishmaelites and to Potiphar. Artapanus reports that Joseph excelled his brothers in wisdom and understanding (σύνεσις, φρόνησις) and, for this reason, his brothers plotted against him (Artap. 2.1). Foreseeing the conspiracy, however, Joseph sought out some nearby Arabs to carry him into Egypt (Artap. 2.1). Once in Egypt, Joseph met the king, who appointed him finance minister over the whole country

200. See page 237 f. below.

201. Arist., *Pol.* 1254b 6–10, 20–23.

202. Arist., *Pol.* 1255a 39–1255b 1.

203. ἀρετή: *Ios.* 80, 87.

204. σωφροσύνη: *Ios.* 87; σοφία: 106; φρόνησις: 117, 268; συνετός: 117; λόγων δύναμις: 268;

205. εὐγένεια: *Ios.* 4, 37, 106, 248; εὐπατρίδης: 69, 248; καλοκάγαθία: 37, 85, 124.

206. ἐλεύθερος: *Ios.* 47, 106.

(Artap. 2.2).

Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum may also ignore Joseph's servitude. *LAB* treats Gn 12.4 through the end of Genesis in a single chapter and compresses Gn 37:4–36 into one verse, *LAB* 8:9, which reports that Joseph's brothers hated him and that they handed him over (*tradere*) to Potiphar. Because the *vetus Latina* uses *vendere*, to render מכר/*ἀποδίδομαι* in Gn 37 and 45, with two exceptions,²⁰⁷ the Greek and Hebrew beneath *LAB* 8:9's *tradere*, may downplay or omit Joseph's sale into slavery. The extreme compression of *LAB*'s account makes this only a conjecture.²⁰⁸

207. Gn 37:27: Ambrose *Jos.* 3.14: *vendamus...tradamus*. Gn 37:28: Jerome *Qu. hebr. Gen.* (PL vol. 23 pt. 2 col. 1045-1046): *vendiderunt*. Gn 37.36: August. *Quaest. Hept.* I:127: *vendiderunt*; Jerome *Qu. hebr. Gen.* (PL vol. 23. pt. 2 col. 1045-1046): *vendiderunt*. Gn 45.4: Ambrose *Jos.* 12.69: *tradidistis*; Gn 45.5: Ambrose *Jos.* 12.69: *vendidistis*.

208. Perrot et al. comment that the compression of *LAB* 8 precludes drawing conclusions from its omissions. (Perrot et al. 1976 99). *LAB* 8 omits Joseph's time in Potiphar's house or his imprisonment, and *LAB* 8:10 continues with Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams.

Chapter 3 - Greek and Latin Sources on Jewish Origins

Introduction

What might Josephus's first-century CE Roman audience have known about Jewish origins?¹ Writing in the first decade of the second century CE, Tacitus, Josephus's younger contemporary, presented six accounts of Jewish origins in his ethnographic excursus on the Jews in *Histories* Book 5.² The last account, which Tacitus attributes to "most authors" and then develops at length, claims the Jews were originally Egyptians. With one exception, other contemporary sources, including the ethnographic excursuses on the Jews by Strabo and Pompeius Trogus, also ascribe Egyptian origins to the Jews. Strikingly, no pagan author before the second century CE appears to have known the Jews' own story of their servitude in Egypt.

After examining ancient ethnography and how ancient authors conceived of the origins of nations and their customs, this chapter investigates what Greek and Latin authors knew about Jewish origins and what, if anything, they knew about the Jews' national servitude in Egypt.

1. On Josephus's Roman audience, see Chapter 1 page 31 ff.

2. Tac. *Hist.* 5.2-3.

A. Ethnography in Antiquity

Greek and Latin authors frequently wrote about foreign lands and peoples, although such writing did not have a specific generic name in antiquity.³ In an influential article written in 1909, Felix Jacoby identified ethnography both as a sub-genre of Greek historical writing and as a stage in its development.⁴ Although some recent scholarship has criticized Jacoby's identification of ethnography as a specific genre,⁵ scholars have no difficulty recognizing it when they see it.⁶

Rives identifies three main traditions in ancient ethnography.⁷ The first strand, which began with the *Periegesis* of Hecataeus of Miletus, included comments on people and places within the literary framework of a journey. Rives notes that later descriptive geographies, like that of Strabo, are part of this periegetic tradition. A second ethnographic tradition comprised expanded works about a single people or region, such as the *Aegyptiaka* and *Persika* of Hellanicus of Lesbos.⁸ Only one such ethnographic monograph is extant, the *Germania* of Tacitus.⁹ The third ethnographic tradition included descriptions of people and places as excursuses in larger historical works. Such

3. See the discussions in Rives 1999 12, Fornara 1983 12, and Woolf 2011 13–16. Bar-Kochva, by contrast, claims that ethnography was recognized as a genre, although it lacked a generic name (Bar-Kochva 1996 10).

4. Jacoby 1909. Jacoby recognized that the term ethnography was not an ancient one (Jacoby 1909 88–89).

5. Marincola 1999 and Woolf 2011 13–17.

6. Marincola admits that portions of some histories are “ethnographic” (Marincola 1999 296) and Woolf discusses “the ethnographic mode” (Woolf 2011 16). “I know it when I see it” was U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart’s famous comment about hard-core pornography in *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 378 U.S. 184 (1964).

7. Rives 1999 12–15.

8. *FGrH* 4.

9. Marincola 1999 296.

ethnographic excursuses could be substantial, such as Herodotus's famous descriptions of Egypt and Scythia,¹⁰ or quite brief, such as Sallust's excursus on Africa or Tacitus's description of Britain in *Agricola*.¹¹

Ancient ethnographers had a variety of goals. A basic aim was often presenting an account of a people's "mode of life" in a historical and geographical context.¹² Such information could be intrinsically interesting and Ian Kidd suggests that this was Diodorus Siculus's motivation for writing.¹³ However, ethnographies could also provide deeper insights. According to Kidd, Posidonius thought that ethnography revealed a people's "national character," which could serve as a key to explain their actions and was therefore crucial for historical analysis.¹⁴ Similarly, Rives suggests that Tacitus used his discussion of the Germans' character in *Germania* as a way of explaining their continued resistance to Rome.¹⁵ According to Bickerman, Greek ethnographers described the origins of barbarian peoples to integrate them into the Greeks' pan-Hellenic scheme of primeval history, even if this often meant ignoring a people's own account of their origins.¹⁶ Such a scheme of national relationships could be used to establish a hierarchy among nations.¹⁷ An ethnography could also be used to construct an anti-type against which a nation could define its self-identity. Woolf suggests that depictions of the Celts in late republican, Latin literature functioned, in part, to define Roman identity as

10. Egypt: Hdt. 2.2–182; Scythia: Hdt. 4.5–82.

11. Sall. *Jug.* 17–19; Tac. *Agr.* 10–12.

12. Fornara 1983 1.

13. Kidd 1988 310.

14. Kidd 1988 56, 68, 309–310.

15. Rives 1999 55.

16. Bickerman 1952 esp. 71–73.

17. Woolf 2011 41.

everything the Celts were not.¹⁸ An ethnography could also work in reverse by constructing a picture of a “noble savage” which compared unfavorably to an author’s contemporaries, and Bilhah Wardy suggests this was an important goal of Tacitus’s *Germania*.¹⁹

An ethnographic excursus could also serve to improve a narrative. Ethnographic excursuses often prefaced the descriptions of historical events and began with a formulaic opening.²⁰ An ethnographic digression could slow narrative time,²¹ break up a monotonous narrative,²² or entertain readers by introducing a sense of the exotic.²³ An author could also use an ethnographic excursus to frame the actions of a central character. Woolf argues that Tacitus’s portrayal of Britain as a savage place in *Agricola* was a useful fiction that created a stage on which Agricola could display the ancient Roman virtues which Domitian’s tyranny had snuffed out in Rome.²⁴

Woolf observes that obtaining accurate information about barbarian origins was often impossible, and, as a consequence, an ethnography’s main concern was explaining contemporary relationships²⁵ —which suggests that ancient readers did not expect to

18. Woolf 2011 23.

19. Wardy 1979 619–620.

20. As Wardy notes (Wardy 1979 615). For example, Caes. *B. Gall.* 6.11.1: *Quoniam ad hunc locum perventum est, non alienum esse videtur...*; Sall. *Iug.* 79.1: *Sed quoniam in eas regiones per Leptitanorum negotia venimus, non indignum videtur...*; Tac. *Hist.* 5.2: *Sed quoniam famosae urbis supremum diem tradituri sumus, congruens videtur...* Similar introductions are found in Greek: Hecataeus of Abdera *ap.* Diod. Sic. 40.3: *Ἡμεῖς δὲ μέλλοντες ἀναγράφειν τὸν πρὸς Ἰουδαίους πόλεμον, οἰκεῖον εἶναι...*

21. Woolf 2011 16.

22. Bar-Kochva 1996 11.

23. Mellor 1999 186.

24. Woolf 2011 90–92, 110

25. Woolf 2011 43–44.

learn “the truth” about barbarian origins from an ethnography. However, ancient readers probably did not have fixed expectations of all ethnographies. Ethnographies may have served different purposes for different authors in different works and functioned simultaneously on multiple levels. For example, Rives’s comment that Tacitus’s description of the Germans’ character explained their resistance to Rome, and Wardy’s observation that Tacitus’s Germans served as a foil for contemporary Roman *mores* may both be correct.²⁶ An ethnographic portrayal of a nation could be rhetorically useful and also accurate.

An ancient ethnography usually describes a nation’s origin or ancient history (*origo-archaeologia*), the geography of its land, its laws and customs, and its history—often following this order.²⁷ A given ethnography might omit one of these sections, emphasize one section over another, or treat them in a different order.²⁸

Because the circumstances of a nation’s origin were crucial to understanding its character, customs, and history, an ethnography usually began with the *origo-archaeologia*.²⁹ Ancient sources regularly distinguished two types of origin: a nation could be autochthonous or formed by migration.³⁰ Ethnographies identify several ancient

26. Rives 1999 55; Wardy 1979 619–620.

27. Bar-Kochva 1996 10, 96. See his excellent discussions of the structure and content of an ancient ethnography: 10–13, 191–207, 217–219. Other scholars, including Fornara (Fornara 1983 14), Sterling (Sterling 1992 53, 72), and Marincola (Marincola 1999 285) omit national origin, perhaps under the continuing influence of Jacoby, who listed genealogy as a separate subgenre (Jacoby 1909 85 and *passim*).

28. Rives 1999 15; Bar-Kochva 1996 12, 192, 196–197, 203, 219.

29. Bar-Kochva 1996 217.

30. See, for example, Herodotus on the Carians and Caunians (Hdt. 1.171–172); Diodorus Siculus on the Ethiopians and Egyptians (Diod. Sic. 3.2–3), and the Sicani

peoples as autochthonous. Diodorus Siculus notes that “they report” that the Ethiopians were the first of all humans, and, not being composed of immigrants but being born from the land, they were justly called autochthonous, as almost everyone agreed.³¹ Diodorus Siculus reports that the Britons and the Indians were autochthonous nations, and comments that the Indians had never sent or received a colony.³² Tacitus concludes that the Germans were indigenous because their hymns celebrate the god Tuisto, born from the soil, who had founded the *gens* with his son’s help.³³ Migratory origin was more common than autochthony. In Book 1 of his *Geography*, Strabo lists many nations formed by migration, including Greek tribes such as the Ionians, Dorians, Achaeans, and Aeolians; and peoples living in Pontus (migrants from Western Iberia), Ethiopia (migrants from Egypt), and Colchis (migrants from Western Iberia and Egypt).³⁴ As was well-known in antiquity, Rome owed its origin to migration. Dionysius of Halicarnassus relates nine different accounts of the founding of Rome by migrants and observes that he deliberately omits many other versions.³⁵

Autochthony conveyed great prestige. Aristotle defined nobility (εὐγένεια) for a nation or polis as being autochthonous or ancient.³⁶ Similarly, Hyperides observed that

(Diod. Sic. 5.6.1); and Tacitus on the Britons (Tac. *Agr.* 11.1). A third possibility was that a nation could be a mixture of natives and immigrants; see Sallust on the Africans (Sall. *Iug.* 17.7).

31. Diod. Sic. 3.2.1.

32. Britons: Diod. Sic. 5.21; Indians: Diod. Sic. 2.38.

33. Tac. *Germ.* 2.1, 2.3.

34. Str. 1.3.21. This list is very long. Migrant peoples include Ionians, Dorians, Achaeans, Aeolians, Aenianians, Perrhaebians, Carians, Trerans, Teucrians, Galatians, Cimmerians, and Enetians. Strabo later notes that the Phrygians were migrants (10.3.16).

35. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.72–73.

36. Arist. *Rhet.* 1360b31.

autochthony was an origin of unsurpassed nobility.³⁷ According to Diodorus Siculus, the Greeks and many of the barbarians claim to be autochthonous.³⁸ Such claims were sometimes disputed. In his description of Sicily, Thucydides notes that the Sicilians claimed to be autochthonous, but comments that they were really migrants from Iberia.³⁹ Diodorus Siculus, citing later sources, claims the Sicani were not Iberians, as Philistus maintained, but autochthonous, as Timaeus correctly demonstrated.⁴⁰ According to Herodotus, the Carians and Cretans disagree about the Carians' origins: the Carians claim autochthony, but the Cretans say they were migrants from the islands.⁴¹ Diodorus Siculus implies that the Ethiopians and the Egyptians dispute each other's claims to autochthony and ancient origins. The Egyptians maintain that the first humans came into existence in Egypt because of the land's temperateness, citing as proof the contemporary phenomenon of the generation of mice by the soil of the Thebaid.⁴² In Book 3, however, Diodorus notes that "they report" that the Ethiopians were the first of all men.⁴³ Moreover, the Ethiopians themselves claim that the Egyptians were colonists sent from Ethiopia under the leadership of Osiris.⁴⁴

An innovation in Hellenistic ethnography, according to Bar-Kochva, was the use

37. Hyp. *Epit.* 7. Hyperides: Athenian statesman, 389–322 BCE (*OCD4* s.v. Hyperides).

38. Diod. Sic. 1.9.3.

39. Thuc. 6.2.2.

40. Diod. Sic. 5.6.1.

41. Hdt. 1.171. Although Herodotus claims the Caunians are autochthonous, they claim that they came from Crete (Hdt. 1.172).

42. Diod. Sic. 1.10.

43. Diod. Sic. 3.2.

44. Diod. Sic. 3.3.

of one section of an ethnography to explain another section.⁴⁵ An author could use the special circumstances of a nation's origin to explain their customs. The geography and antiquity of an autochthonous nation could explain its customs, whereas their land of origin or the circumstances of their migration could explain the customs of a nation of migrants.⁴⁶

Autochthony could explain a range of national customs. Tacitus argues that the Semnones' special religious ceremonies in a sacred grove demonstrate that the *gens* arose there.⁴⁷ According to Diodorus Siculus, the Egyptians claim that they were the first humans and thus the first to identify Osiris (the Sun) and Isis (the Moon), the five components of the universe—each of which they regarded as divine—and the gods who were previously mortal kings of Egypt.⁴⁸ The Egyptians maintained that their ancient custom of dedicating the first grain to be harvested was proof that Osiris had made them give up cannibalism and that Isis had taught them how to cultivate grain.⁴⁹ Autochthony could also explain a nation's other customs, including social practices and laws. For example, the Egyptians' autochthony, and consequent worship of Osiris and Isis, explained their unique law permitting brother-sister marriage.⁵⁰ Diodorus Siculus attributes the Britons' use of chariots, the construction of their dwellings, their method of harvesting grain, and their modest way of living to their autochthonous origins.⁵¹

45. Bar-Kochva 1996 12, 23.

46. Bar-Kochva 1996 14.

47. Tac. *Germ.* 39.1–4.

48. Diod. Sic. 1.11–13.

49. Diod. Sic. 1.14.

50. Diod. Sic. 1.27.1–2

51. Diod. Sic. 5.21.5–6.

Diodorus seems to suggest the Indians' autochthony is the cause of their peculiar customs including the amazing fact that they have no slaves.⁵² Diodorus also explains that the Tyrrhenians live in a manner completely different from that of all other humans because they are autochthonous.⁵³

The customs of a people formed by migration could stem from their land of origin or the circumstances of their migration. The Ethiopians offer as proof that the Egyptians are Ethiopian colonists the fact that many supposedly Egyptian customs were Ethiopian in origin, including the belief that kings are gods, the special attention paid to burials, the shapes of their statues, the orders of their priests, and the felt hats worn by their kings.⁵⁴ Diodorus twice justifies the claim that the Colchians were colonists from Egypt by noting that the Colchians practice circumcision.⁵⁵ Strabo comments that just as the Phrygians were colonists from Thrace, it is likely that their sacred rites were also Thracian.⁵⁶ The circumstances of a nation's migration could also affect their customs. Vergil describes how, at Buthrotum, Helenus taught Aeneas the proper way to sacrifice, using a purple robe to cover his head (*Aen.* 3.403–409), and has Aeneas remark that they subsequently veiled their heads when sacrificing to Juno (*Aen.* 3.543–547). When Aeneas decrees that his band of exiles should celebrate a visit to the grave of Anchises with games, he hopes to be able to offer these rites again annually when he founds his city (*Aen.* 5.55–60), and then notes that Rome kept the tradition of games as an ancestral

52. Diod. Sic. 2.39.5.

53. Diod. Sic. 1.30.1.

54. Diod. Sic. 3.3–4, 6.

55. Diod. Sic. 1.28, 55.

56. Str. 10.3.16.

observance (*Aen.* 5.596–604).

B. Statements about Jewish Origins in Greek and Latin Authors

Extant passages in twelve Greek or Latin authors mention Jewish origins.⁵⁷ Four sources comment on Jewish origins in passing or are fragments of works which are not extant; this includes comments by Clearchus of Soli, Apollonius Molon, Nicolaus of Damascus, and Plutarch. Four ethnographic excursuses on the Jews survive in whole or in part in Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Pompeius Trogus, and Tacitus. Josephus cites and criticizes four authors' accounts of the Jews' departure from Egypt in *Against Apion*.⁵⁸

This evidence is complicated and incomplete. For example, Apollonius Molon probably wrote a monograph about the Jews, to which both Josephus and Eusebius refer, but which does not survive. Eusebius, via Alexander Polyhistor, preserves a passage from Apollonius that mentions the origins of the Jews. Thus, although Apollonius might have written a monograph about the Jews, only a third-hand account of his comments on Jewish origins survives. The extant parts of Diodorus Siculus include three inconsistent accounts of Jewish origins. Two of these passages exist only in the epitome of Photius, and the third is extant directly in Diodorus. Josephus wrote *Against Apion* as a polemical work and discusses four accounts of the Jews' departure from Egypt in the section of *Against Apion* where he refutes slanders about the Jews. The passages Josephus cites are not preserved by any other sources. Thus, this chapter divides the evidence on Jewish origins into three categories: brief comments on Jewish origins, ethnographic excursuses,

57. See the summary in Table 1, page 155.

58. Josephus relates two accounts from Manetho, one (*Ap.* 1.73–105) in the section of *Apion* where Josephus claims to prove the Jews' antiquity (*Ap.* 1.69–218) and one (*Ap.* 1.227–251) in the section where Josephus replies to slanders (*Ap.* 1.219–2.144).

and the sources on the Jews' departure from Egypt cited in *Against Apion*.

Josephus claims in the proem to *Against Apion* that he is writing to refute the doubts of many people about the Jews' antiquity.⁵⁹ In the section on Greek evidence for the Jews' antiquity, Josephus cites Clearchus of Soli's description of an encounter in Asia Minor between Aristotle and a Jew (*Ap.* 1.177–181).⁶⁰ According to Clearchus, Aristotle explained to a companion that Jews were descendants of Indian philosophers (*Ap.* 1.179).⁶¹

Apollonius Molon was a Rhodian who came to Rome in the 80's BCE and taught rhetoric to Cicero and Julius Caesar.⁶² Passages in *Against Apion* and Eusebius suggest that Molon wrote a monograph about the Jews. Josephus reports that Apollonius scattered accusations about the Jews throughout his work instead of grouping them together, like Apion (*Ap.* 2.148).⁶³ Eusebius, relying on Alexander Polyhistor, describes Apollonius as having composed "the compilation against the Jews" (*P.E.* 9.19.1), which Bar-Kochva and Stern conclude was a monograph on the Jews.⁶⁴ Josephus does not cite

59. *Ap.* 1.2.

60. Bar-Kochva dates Clearchus to c. 340's–270's BCE (Bar-Kochva 2010 41).

61. Stern, Momigliano, and Feldman each suggest that the account is fictional (Stern I: 47, Momigliano 1975 86, Feldman 1993 5). Bar Kochva situates the story in the context of contemporary philosophical disputes (Bar-Kochva 2010 73–74).

62. See Schürer-Vermes III.1: 599–600 and Bar-Kochva 2010 472.

63. *Ap.* 2.148 contains a textual problem. Thackeray, Naber, and Bar-Kochva follow the *editio princeps* in reading διὰ πάσης τῆς συγγραφῆς, "throughout his work." Niese and Barclay (BJC) follow manuscript *Laurentianus*, which reads καὶ δὴ εἶπας "and indeed having said." Reinach conjectures δὴ ἡμᾶς (Reinach 1963 63). Niese notes that some text has been omitted and Thackeray comments that the text is doubtful. For a detailed defense of the reading in the *editio princeps*, see Bar-Kochva 2010 480–482.

64. Bar-Kochva 2010 480–482, Stern I: 148. Eusebius uses ἡ συσκευὴ several times in *Preparatio Evangelica* in references to monographs of Porphyry: *Against the Christians*

Molon on the Jews' origins, but reports that Apollonius dates the Jews' departure from Egypt to suit himself (*Ap.* 2.16), and criticizes Jewish worship and the temple (*Ap.* 2.79). Josephus also notes that Apion used Apollonius as a source (*Ap.* 2.79).⁶⁵ According to Eusebius, Apollonius reports that “after the flood, the man who survived left Armenia...having been expelled from his own (ἴδιος) [home/land] by the inhabitants” (*P.E.* 9.19.1). After three generations, Abraham was born. Moses was the grandson of Joseph, himself a grandson of Abraham (*P.E.* 9.19.2–3). Although Apollonius might have gone on to explain Jewish customs by reference to their Armenian origins, only these comments on Jewish origins are extant.

Josephus drew extensively on the universal history of Nicolaus of Damascus for the accounts in *Jewish Antiquities* of the later Hasmonean period and the reign of Herod,⁶⁶ but also cites Nicolaus three times on Jews' early history.⁶⁷ One of these passages mentions the origins of Abraham. In *Antiquities*, Josephus emphasizes that Abraham was originally Chaldean by modifying Gn 12.1, which notes that Abraham departed from Haran, and reporting that Abraham left Chaldea at God's command and

(*P.E.* 1.9.20, 5.1.9, 10.9.11, 10.9.12); *Of the Philosophy to be Derived from Oracles* (*P.E.* 5.5.5, 5.36.5). Gifford consistently renders ἡ συσκευή as “the compilation” (Gifford 1903).

65. Molon disparages Moses (*Ap.* 2.145) and claims the Jews are atheists and misanthropes (*Ap.* 2.148, 258). Bar-Kochva, who believes that Josephus had a copy of Apollonius's monograph, argues that Josephus deliberately refrains from citing Apollonius on the age of the patriarchs or the date of the exodus because Josephus wishes to discredit Apollonius's comments about Moses, the Jews, and Jewish law (Bar-Kochva 2010 485). However, Josephus does cite two accounts from Manetho, supporting the accuracy of one (*Ap.* 1.73–105) although rejecting the other (*Ap.* 1.227–287). Josephus could have made similar use of Apollonius.

66. On Josephus's use of Nicolaus, see Schürer-Vermes I: 30–32, 50–51.

67. *Ant.* 1.94, 108, 159.

went to Canaan (*Ant.* 1.154).⁶⁸ After describing Abraham's Gn 12 covenant with God, Josephus names three authors who he claims mention Abraham (*Ant.* 1.158–160). In *Ant.* 1.158, Josephus cites a passage from Book IV of Nicolaus' *Histories* which reports that Abraham ruled in Damascus, having come with an army from the land of the Chaldeans. This is the only extant fragment on Jewish origins from Nicolaus and its context is unclear.⁶⁹

Plutarch, Josephus's younger contemporary, recounts a story about Typhon that implies that the Jews had Egyptian origins. In *De Iside et Osiride*, Plutarch emphasizes that Typhon, whom the Egyptians call Seth,⁷⁰ is the enemy of everything wise, good, and beneficial,⁷¹ and the cause of everything harmful and destructive.⁷² Because of Typhon's obstructiveness, the Egyptians assign to him the most stupid of tame animals, the ass,⁷³ and several Egyptian ritual practices link Typhon to the ass.⁷⁴ Plutarch concludes his account of Typhon and asses by reporting a story about Typhon and the Jews. Plutarch comments that those who say that Typhon fled battle on the back of an ass for seven days and then gave birth to Hierosolymus and Iudaeus are "manifestly dragging (παρέλκω) Jewish matters into the story, as is self-evident" (*Plut. De Is. et Os.* 31). The story assigns to the presumed eponymous founders of the Jews an Egyptian origin in mythological times. Plutarch's use of παρέλκω, which can mean adding something superfluous,

68. On the Genesis account of Abraham's origins, see Chapter 2 A1a page 42 ff. On Josephus's portrayal of Abraham, see Chapter 5 B2 page 198 ff.

69. Stern I: 233.

70. *Plut. De Is. et Os.* 41, 49, 62.

71. *Plut. De Is. et Os.* 2, 64.

72. *Plut. De Is. et Os.* 45.

73. *Plut. De Is. et Os.* 50. Cf. *Plut. Conv. sept. sap.* 5.

74. *Plut. De Is. et Os.* 30–31.

dragging something in, or even doing something fraudulently,⁷⁵ suggests that he rejects the story, which may have circulated among his Egyptian sources.

Four ethnographic excursuses about the Jews survive from antiquity. Diodorus Siculus includes an excursus about Jewish origins that he ascribes to Hecataeus of Abdera in book 40 of his *Library of History*, which dates from the late republican period.⁷⁶ Strabo and Pompeius Trogus, who completed their works in time of Augustus or Tiberius, also wrote brief excursuses on the Jews.⁷⁷ Tacitus prefaces his account of the fall of Jerusalem with a detailed ethnographic excursus on the Jews in *Histories*, written in the early second century CE before the Jewish revolt of 115-117 CE.⁷⁸

Diodorus Siculus's universal history, the product of thirty years' labor, treats the period from before the Trojan War to 60 BCE.⁷⁹ Only fifteen of *Library's* forty books are extant, along with fragments of other books.⁸⁰ Diodorus mentions Jewish origins in three places: in book 1, which is extant directly, and in books 34/35 and 40, summaries of

75. Bailly 2000 1485 s.v. παρέλκω I.2.

76. Sacks comments that Diodorus wrote *Library* from 56 to 30 BCE (Sacks 1994 220); Green notes that Diodorus edited *Library* for publication no later than 31/30 BCE (Green 2010 2). Photius preserves Diodorus's account of the Jews from *Library* 40 in his *Bibliotheca* and notes that Diodorus attributed the account to Hecataeus of Miletus. See the discussion of Photius below, page 131 f. Hecataeus of Abdera c. 360–290 BCE (*OCD4*).

77. On the dating of Strabo's *Geography*, see Dueck et al. 2005 1–2 and the literature cited there. Lindsay and Potheary hold that Strabo completed his work in the time of Tiberius. Develin dates the completion of Pompeius Trogus's *Historiae Philippicae* to c. 20 CE (Develin 1994 2–3). Drury dates Strabo to c. 64 BCE– after 24 CE (Drury 1985 857).

78. On the dating of Tacitus's *Histories*, see Rives 1999 40–41 and Gruen 2011 185.

79. Diod. Sic. 1.4.1, 6–7.

80. Books 1–5 and 11–20 are extant, (Oldfather 1933 xiv, Vogel 1985 I:iv).

which exist in the *Bibliotheca* of Photius. Diodorus includes brief comments on Jewish origins in books 1 and 34/35; the passage in 40.3 is a well-structured ethnographic excursus.

Diodorus begins his universal history with an account of the origins of the cosmos (1.6–7) and of human society (1.8–9), before turning to an extensive ethnography of the Egyptians, which occupies the rest of Book 1 (1.10–98). After discussing Egyptian origins and the age of Isis and Osiris, Diodorus reports the Egyptians' claim that the Babylonians, Argives, Colchians, and Jews were originally Egyptian colonists (1.28.1–2). According to Diodorus, the Egyptians say that the nation of the Jews was founded by certain people they sent to colonize (οικίζω) the territory between Arabia and Syria (1.28.2), which implies that the Jews were originally autochthonous Egyptians.⁸¹ Their Egyptian origin explains the Jews' and Colchians' ancient practice of circumcision, which is a custom they brought over from Egypt (1.28.3).

In the next section, Diodorus's rejection of the Egyptian assertion that Athens was an Egyptian colony supports the claim that the Jews were originally Egyptian. According to Diodorus, the Egyptians say that "even the Athenians" (1.28.4) were Egyptian colonists and offer a variety of proofs, ranging from the etymology of the word ἄστυ (1.28.1) to the supposedly similar appearance of Athenians and Egyptians (1.29.5). Diodorus dismisses the Egyptians' assertion and comments that they claim Athens as a colony because of a love of glory rather than a concern for the truth (1.29.5). Moreover, although the Egyptians claim many colonies, Diodorus has declined to record them

81. As Bar-Kochva also notes (Bar-Kochva 2010 110 n. 59).

because the Egyptians offer no accurate proof of their assertions and no trustworthy historian has testified to them (1.29.5–6). By rejecting the assertion that Athens was an Egyptian colony and refusing to list the other colonies Egyptians claim as their own, Diodorus underscores the veracity of the claims he has already listed: the Jews, among other nations, were originally Egyptian.⁸²

82. Scholars have long maintained that Diodorus took much of his Egyptian ethnography from Hecataeus of Abdera, but allow that Diodorus inserted a number of his own comments. Murray, Sacks, and the Brill New Jacoby ascribe the comments in 1.29.5–6 to Diodorus (Murray 1970 145–147, cf. also the helpful table on p. 146; Sacks 1990 63; BNJ 264 F25). Bar-Kochva hesitantly attributes 1.29.5–6 to Diodorus (Bar-Kochva 1996 209), but, more recently, Bar-Kochva ascribes it to Hecataeus (Bar-Kochva 2010 111–113) and argues that Hecataeus dismissed the claim of the Egyptian origin of the Jews, Athenians, and the people of Danaus and Cadmus, but accepted the claims about the Babylonians and Colchians. Bar-Kochva thus attempts to reconcile the ethnographic excursus attributed to Hecataeus in 40.3 with Diodorus’s comment in 1.28, which Bar-Kochva also attributes to Hecataeus in accordance with the consensus view. Burton ascribes 1.29.5–6 to Diodorus and argues that Diodorus means to repudiate the claims in 1.28.1–4 because he does not attribute them to a reputable historian by citing one. Burton concludes that the problem of 1.28–29 is “vexed” (Burton 1972 18).

However, Diodorus does not explicitly attribute the views in 1.28–29 to Hecataeus, but to “Egyptians.” Diodorus also sets out the claim about Athenian origins separately from the other claims: “They say that *even* the Athenians were colonists...” (καὶ τοὺς Ἀθηναίους δὲ φασὶν ἀποίκους εἶναι...,” 1.28.4). A reader of 1.28–29 would probably understand that the narrator was only rejecting the claims of the Egyptian origin of the Athenians and of other unmentioned peoples, not commenting on a passage in book 40 which Diodorus explicitly attributes to Hecataeus.

The attribution of most of book 1 to Hecataeus of Abdera dates from the late nineteenth century. Jacoby lists most of book 1 as a fragment of Hecataeus and, largely as a result, this is the standard view (see the detailed discussion in Burton 1972 3–6 and Muntz 2011 575–576). Murray’s 1970 article and accompanying table reinforces this viewpoint and is often cited as authoritative, for example, by the Brill New Jacoby F264 F25 (Murray 1970, table p. 146; Brill New Jacoby <<http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-jacoby/hekataios-264-a264>>). Recent work, however, questions treating Diodorus as a mere copyist and object of *Quellenforschung* (see Sacks 1990 esp. 3–8; Green 2006 1–2, 23–34). Burton and Muntz, separately, argue compellingly that the evidence that Diodorus closely followed Hecataeus is overstated (Burton 1972 1–34; Muntz 2011). The attribution of nearly all of Diod. Sic. 1.10–29 and 1.43–98 to Hecataeus on the basis of six fairly brief fragments (*FGrH* 264F1–6) is questionable, especially given that Diodorus himself spent 4–5 years in Egypt and consulted written material in Alexandria (Diodorus mentions his visit to Egypt: 1.83.9, 3.38.1, 17.52.5; Diodorus’s use of records in Alexandria: 3.38.1. For a chronology of Diodorus’s stay in Alexandria, see Green

Halfway through book 1, Diodorus again refers to the Jews' Egyptian origins in his discussion of the exploits of the Egyptian king Sesostris (1.53–58). Noting that Sesostris had passed over the Ganges and visited all of India, Diodorus adds that, at that time, some Egyptians “left behind near Lake Maeotis founded the nation of the Colchi[ans]” (1.55.4).⁸³ The proof of the Colchians' Egyptian origins is that they practice circumcision, as do the Egyptians, because the custom continued among the colonists just as it had among the Jews (1.55.5). This implies that the Jews were originally Egyptian colonists and that their Egyptian origin is proved by the Jewish custom of circumcision—which mirrors the claim in 1.28.⁸⁴

The passages from books 34/35 and 40 survive via Photius, where they appear one after another in codex 244, the longest section of his *Bibliotheca*. The second part of

2006 4–5). See the excellent discussion of the fragments in Muntz 2011 577–585. Muntz concludes that there is no compelling evidence for ascribing book 1 to Hecataeus; Burton maintains that Diodorus used many sources, including Hecataeus, and that book 1 bears the imprint of his critical intelligence and authorship.

83. Oldfather, LCL.

84. Taking Hecataeus as Diodorus's source, Bar-Kochva argues that 1.55.5 demonstrates that Hecataeus accepted the Egyptian origins of the Colchians. Oddly, Bar-Kochva seems to ignore that 1.55.5 also claims that the Jews have Egyptian origins (Bar-Kochva 2010 113). According to Bar-Kochva, Hecataeus deliberately omits circumcision from the excursus in 40.3 because he wants to reject the claim that the Jews were Egyptian by origin (Bar-Kochva 2010 114).

Burton argues that 1.51–68 is based on Herodotus (Burton 1972 25), who, in a digression in his account of the conquests of Sesostris, notes that the Colchians' practice of circumcision (2.104) and their manner of working linen (2.105) prove that they were originally Egyptians. Herodotus also comments that the Phoenicians and “the Syrians of Palestine” acknowledge that they learned circumcision from the Egyptians. Josephus claimed that the “Syrians of Palestine” was a reference to the Jews (*Ant.* 8.262, *Ap.* 1.171).

If Diodorus based 1.55 on Herodotus, he may have ignored Herodotus's other references and interpreted the “Syrians of Palestine” to refer to the Jews, or Diodorus may simply be reiterating the claim from 1.28.3. Stern conjectures that Hecataeus understood “the Syrians of Palestine” in Herodotus to refer to the Jews, and that Diodorus transmitted this conclusion (Stern I: 3).

the *Bibliotheca*, from codex 233 on, contains Photius's reading notes, made for his own use with the books in hand.⁸⁵ These notes follow the order of the original sources closely, while paraphrasing or condensing them.⁸⁶ Treadgold, who categorized each of Photius's extracts in the *Bibliotheca*, classifies codex 244 as an "analytical review" containing long extracts and literal borrowings.⁸⁷ Photius also included a summary review of Diodorus Siculus in codex 70, and Treadgold concludes that Photius owned a copy of Diodorus's *Library*.⁸⁸ Photius appears to have had a strong personal reaction to Diodorus's passages on Jewish origins in books 34/35 and 40: Photius comments after each extract that Diodorus had told lies about the Jews' origins, but tried to avoid responsibility by attributing his falsehoods to others.⁸⁹ This suggests that Photius's notes on Diodorus's account of Jewish origins from books 34/35 and 40 are accurate.⁹⁰

The passage in book 34/35.1.1–5 tells the story of Antiochus VII Sidetes's siege of Jerusalem.⁹¹ When the Jews are compelled to seek terms, the majority of Antiochus's friends advise him to take the city by force and completely annihilate the Jews because they, alone among nations, refuse to have dealings with others and consider everyone to be an enemy (34/35.1.1). The friends point out that the Jews' ancestors had been banished (*φωγαδεύω*) from all Egypt as impious and hated by the gods (34/35.1.1). In order to purify the country, all those with white or leprous marks on their bodies had

85. Treadgold 1980 42.

86. Treadgold 1980 43.

87. Treadgold 1980 81–83, 163.

88. Treadgold 1980 93–94.

89. Phot. *Bibl.* codex 244 380a, 381a.

90. *Contra* Goukowsy 2014. See page 134 n. 99 below

91. Cf. *Ant.* 13.236–248.

been collected and sent across the border (34/35.1.2). Those who had been banished (ἐξορίζω) gathered together near Jerusalem and “organized the nation of the Jews” (34/35.1.2).⁹² Diodorus frequently uses φευγαδεύω, which commonly means “to banish/exile,” when citizens are driven out of their city or country;⁹³ afterwards they are φυγάδες, “exiles.”⁹⁴ Similarly, ἐξορίζω, can also mean to banish, and Diodorus uses it this way in its one other occurrence in *Library*.⁹⁵ Because the exiles established the Jewish nation only after they had been banished from Egypt and settled near Jerusalem, the friends’ account strongly implies that the Jews were originally Egyptians.⁹⁶

Antiochus’s friends then explain that the exiles introduced utterly strange customs, such as not dining with or thinking well of any other nation; in this way the exiles made their hatred of mankind into a tradition (34/35.1.2). Although Antiochus’s friends do not state this explicitly, the story implies that the Jews’ exile from Egypt was the cause of their antisocial traditions, which, following standard ethnographical practice, uses the nation’s origin to explain its customs.⁹⁷

After recounting Antiochus Epiphanes’s conquest of the temple and his attempt to eliminate the Jews’ customs, Antiochus Sidetes’s friends advise him to annihilate the

92. Walton, LCL.

93. Of the 32 other instances of φευγαδεύω, it is used once figuratively to mean driving someone from public life (1.66.11), and once in a general way that might encompass exiles (14.87.1). In the remaining 30 instances, it clearly means to banish or exile someone from his city/country (3.55.10; 4.10.2, 33.4, 57.2, 72.6; 5.44.7; 11.58.1, 67.5, 87.4; 12.30.2, 9.2; 13.63.5; 14.32.1, 32.1, 40.2, 66.5, 87.1; 15.25.1, 40.5, 5.2; 16.81.3; 18.57.1, 69.4; 19.102.5, 88.1; 21.17.1; 22.1.2, 1.3; 31.31.1; 33.6a.1; 34/35.1.2).

94. E.g. 3.55.10; 12.30.2; 15.25; 19.102.5.

95. 13.111.5.

96. As Stern also notes (Stern I: 305).

97. As Feldman also observes (Feldman 1993 128).

Jewish nation or, failing that, to abolish their customs and force them to change their way of life (34/35.1.3–4). Antiochus Sidetes, however, being high-minded/great-hearted (μεγαλοψυχία) and of a gentle nature, dismisses his friends' charges/accusations against the Jews, and satisfies himself with taking hostages, imposing tribute, and dismantling the walls of Jerusalem (34/35.1.5). Diodorus's language is extremely vague. As Bar-Kochva notes, it is unclear whether Antiochus's μεγαλοψυχία consists in recognizing that his friends' story was true, but choosing to ignore it, or in rejecting his friends' story as false.⁹⁸ If the latter, it is unclear whether Antiochus is dismissing only his friends' comments about Jewish misanthropy or also the account of the Jews' Egyptian origins. Moreover, Diodorus attributes the discussion of the Jews' origins and customs to characters in the narrative: Antiochus's friends describe the Jews' origins and attack their customs, Antiochus dismisses their accusations. The narrator's own attitude towards the Jews' origins thus remains obscure.⁹⁹

98. Bar-Kochva 2010 444–448.

99. Bar-Kochva ascribes 34/35.1 to Posidonius (Bar-Kochva 2010 440–457). While noting that Posidonius's attitude towards the truthfulness of Antiochus's friends' story is unclear (358, 444–448), Bar-Kochva uses Strabo's excursus on the Jews (Str. 16.35–37, discussed below, page 139 ff.), and Josephus' account of Antiochus Sidetes's siege (*Ant.* 13.236–248)—both of which he also attributes to Posidonius (Strabo: 355–398, Josephus: 399–439)—to argue that Antiochus “acquitted the Jews of all charges” because he thought their separateness stemmed from their piety (451–455). According to this view, Posidonius accepted that the Jews were originally Egyptian. Stern, however, remarks that the attribution of Diodorus 34/35 to Posidonius is unproven and that ascribing Strabo's excursus on the Jews to Posidonius is even more problematic (Stern I:141–144, 168). Gager notes that many other authors could have been the source, including Polybius, Strabo, Nicolaus of Damascus, Timagenes, Castor the chronicler, and Apollodorus (Gager 1972 126).

Diodorus does not attribute the account in 34/35.1 to a source.

Photius concludes that the “lies” about the founding of Jerusalem and the Jews' departure from Egypt belong to Diodorus, but, knowing that his account would be refuted, he attributed them to Antiochus' friends (Phot. *Bibl.* codex 244 380a).

In the recent Budé edition of *Library* 33–40, Goukowsky ascribes the friends' initial

Diodorus's account of the Jews in *Library* 40.3, according to Photius, begins with a standard introduction to an ethnographic excursus, noting that he will narrate the nation's founding and its customs, which suggests he used it as a preface to his description of Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 BCE.¹⁰⁰ Placing the story in the remote past,¹⁰¹ Diodorus reports that the masses in Egypt attributed the cause of a pestilence to the presence of many strangers (ξένοι) living among them who observed different sacred customs and sacrifices, which had caused a decline in traditional Egyptian observance (40.3.1). The native Egyptians decided that their troubles would continue unless they removed the foreigners (ἀλλόφυλος), and, in consequence, they banished (ξενηλατέω) the foreign nations (ἀλλοεθνής) (40.3.2). The verb ξενηλατέω refers to the Spartan practice of expelling foreigners.¹⁰² Diodorus's account clarifies that the Jews were not Egyptians.

Although the most notable and active of the expelled group, led by Danaus and Cadmus among others, were cast into Greece, most of the people were driven into what is now called Judea (40.3.1). Moses, the leader of this latter settlement and a man of

advice to destroy the Jews to Diodorus, but argues that the friends' subsequent account of the Jews' origin is probably an invention of Photius or, perhaps, stems from the marginal notes of a Christian source which Photius found in his manuscript and then attributed to Diodorus (Goukowsky 2014 69–83). However, Photius' reading notes were probably intended for his own use (Treadgold 1980 42, 43, 81–83, cited above), not for later editors of Diodorus, and Photius specifically remarks that Diodorus's account of Jewish origins in 34/35 is false. This militates against Goukowsky's conclusion.

100. Ἡμεῖς δὲ μέλλοντες ἀναγράφειν τὸν πρὸς Ἰουδαίους πόλεμον, οἰκεῖον εἶναι διαλαμβάνομεν προδιελθεῖν ἐν κεφαλαίοις τὴν τε τοῦ ἔθνους τούτου ἐξ ἀρχῆς κτίσιν καὶ τὰ παρ' αὐτοῖς νόμιμα (Diod. Sic. 40.3.1). See the note on the formulaic openings of ethnographic excursuses above on page 118 n. 20.

101. τὸ παλαιὸν, Diod. Sic. 40.3.1.

102. *LSJ* s.v. ξενηλασία, ξενηλατέω. As Bar-Kochva and Murray note (Bar-Kochva 1996 34–35; Bar-Kochva 2010 124; Murray 1970 158).

outstanding wisdom and bravery, founded the temple, introduced their worship and ritual service of god, and framed their law and *politeia* (40.3.3). The sacrifices and ways of life that Moses established differ from those of other nations, and, on account of the ξενηλασία that they suffered, Moses introduced an unsocial and foreigner-hating mode of life (40.3.4). In this account, the circumstances of the nation’s origin, expulsion as foreigners, explains their customs.

At the end of his notes on book 40, Photius comments that, as in the account in book 34/35, Diodorus tells lies about the Jews’ departure from Egypt and again tries to avoid censure by ascribing his account to someone else: Hecataeus of Miletus. In the eighteenth century, Wesseling suggested that Photius erred and that “Miletus” should be amended to “Abdera,” and this became the accepted reading.¹⁰³ Diodorus appears to cite Hecataeus of Abdera as “Hecataeus” twice in the directly extant parts of *Library* (1.46.8, 2.47.1) and cites Hecataeus of Miletus once in a section preserved in the Constantinian *Excerpta* (10.25.4).¹⁰⁴ Given Photius’s tendency to confuse authors with similar names, it

103. Wesseling 1809 379. Ironically, Wesseling’s description of Hecataeus of Abdera as “*notu[s] rerum Iudaeorum scriptor[us]*” (“the noted writer of Jewish affairs”) may mean that he had in mind Hecataeus’s *On the Jews* to which Josephus and Origen refer (*Ap.* 1.83, cf. 1.214, 2.43; *C. Cels.* 1.15)—which Bar-Kochva (Bar-Kochva 1996) and Barclay (Barclay 2007 107, 338–340) argue is pseudepigraphic—and possibly *On Abraham*, to which Josephus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius refer (cf. *Ant.* 1.159; Clement *Strom.* 5.14.113 = Eus. *P.E.* 22.13.40)—which scholars also consider pseudepigraphic (Goodman Schürer–Vermes III.1: 674–675). Stern, who follows Wesseling, comments that the writing in 40.3 “accords well” with Diodorus’s book I, which Stern ascribes to Hecataeus of Abdera. (On the attribution of book 1 to Hecataeus, see the discussion on page 130 n. 82.) More convincingly, Bar-Kochva suggests that the causal links between the sections in 40.3 are characteristic of Hecataeus of Abdera and not the *Periegesis* of Hecataeus of Miletus (Bar-Kochva 2010 105–106).

104. Jacoby lists 1.46.8–49.6 as a fragment from Hecataeus of Abdera’s *On the Egyptians* (*FGrH* 264F25) and 2.47.1–6 as fragment from his *On the Hyperboreans* (*FGrH* 264F7). The Constantinian *Excerpta* are the most reliable sources for fragments of Diodorus (Walton 1967 viii–ix).

is possible that Diodorus cited “Hecataeus” and Photius added “of Miletus.”¹⁰⁵

Pompeius Trogus includes an ethnographic excursus on the Jews after his account of Antiochus VII Sidetes’s conquest of the Jews in *Historiae Philippicae*, which is extant in the second century CE epitome of Justin.¹⁰⁶ According to Trogus, the Jews were originally from Damascus (36.2.1). Abraham was third in line to the throne of King Damascus, the city’s namesake. Joseph, Abraham’s grandson, was sold to merchants by

105. As Bar-Kochva also suggests (Bar-Kochva 2010 106).

On errors in Photius see Treadgold 1980 67–80. Treadgold specifically comments that Photius’s confusion of Hecataeus of Abdera with Hecataeus of Miletus is insignificant and similar to mistakes Photius makes in confusing Gelasius of Cyzicus with Gelasius of Caesarea, and John of Aegeae with John Diacrinomenus (Treadgold, email to author, 29 October 2014).

Dornseiff, in the 1930’s, and, more recently, Liebes, argued that Diodorus cited Hecataeus of Miletus. See the references in Schürer–Vermes III.1: 671 n. 267 and Bar-Kochva 2010 105 n. 43 along with Bar-Kochva’s detailed refutation of Liebes (*idem*).

The long-established tradition of ascribing nearly all of Diodorus book 1 to Hecataeus creates the problem of reconciling the seemingly inconsistent accounts of Jewish origins in 1.28/1.55 (Jews originally autochthonous Egyptians) and 40.3 (Jews originally foreigners). According to Gager and Sterling, Jacoby argued that the account of the Jews as autochthonous Egyptians in 1.28 aimed to portray Egypt as the font of civilization; the account in 40.3 is a variant version that displays Egyptian hostility to strangers (Gager 1972 29–29; Sterling 1992 76–77). Bar-Kochva argues both that 1.29.6 is Hecataeus’s rejection of the colonization stories in 1.28 (Bar-Kochva 2010 111–112), and that Hecataeus believed the Jews had a two-step origin: first as colonists from Egypt, who then became a nation, moved back to Egypt, and were expelled as foreigners afterwards (114).

Given that Diodorus may have written book 1 on the basis of his own experiences in Egypt and his research in Alexandria and Rome, and that he attributes the colonization story in 1.28 to Egyptians—passing judgement on it in 1.29.5–6—it is more reasonable to ascribe the account of Jewish origins in 1.28/1.55 to him, and the account in 40.3 to Hecataeus.

106. On the dating and style of Justin’s epitome, see Develin 1994 4–6. Because it is not possible to separate Pompeius Trogus’s original from Justin’s epitome, this section speaks of Trogus as though he was the sole author of the surviving work, cf. Develin 1994 6. Trogus’s description of Antiochus conquest of the Jews is very brief: *Iudaeos quoque... subegit* (36.1.10); Justin may have shortened Trogus’s account.

his brothers and taken to Egypt.¹⁰⁷ During an outbreak of mange and leprosy, the Egyptians expelled Moses, who was Joseph's son, and the afflicted (36.11–12). Moses became the leader of the exiles, stole the Egyptian sacred objects (36.2.13), led the people back towards Damascus, his ancestral homeland, and occupied Mount Sinai (36.2.14). Remembering that they had been expelled because of fear of contagion, the group avoided contact with strangers/foreigners, and this eventually developed into a religious practice (36.2.15). After Moses's death, his son Arruas became priest in charge of the Egyptian sacred objects and became king (36.2.16).

Although Trogus claims in the beginning of his excursus that “the Jews” are from Damascus, his account suggests that Joseph and Moses were descendants of Abraham and that the rest of the group that left Egypt were Egyptians. Trogus reports only that Joseph went to Egypt (36.2.7). When the Egyptians suffer scabies and vitiligo (*Aegyptii, cum scabiem et vitiliginem paterentur*), they expel Moses—Joseph's son¹⁰⁸—along with the diseased (*eum cum aegris...pellunt*), which suggests that the diseased people were all Egyptians (36.2.12). At Mt Sinai, to ensure they are not hated by the natives/inhabitants (*incolai*) on account of their disease, the people do not live with the foreigners/strangers (*peregrini*). Thus, the people are not natives of Damascus and consider the locals to be foreigners, which, in context, implies that the exiles are Egyptians.

Trogus follows standard practice in explaining the Jews' customs by the circumstances of their origin. Because the exiles' journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai lasted seven days, Moses established the seventh day as a holy day to mark the end of

107. 36.2.6–10. Israhel was Joseph's father (36.2.3–5).

108. 36.2.11.

their “hunger and wandering.”¹⁰⁹ As noted, the Jews’ custom of avoiding social contact originated in the fear of contagion that caused their expulsion from Egypt. Trogus also specifies that Moses stole the Egyptian *sacra* and that his son became priest of the Egyptian *sacra* after Moses’s death, which implies that at least some of the Jews’ religious practices were Egyptian.¹¹⁰ This not only explains the origin of aspects of Jewish worship, but also reinforces the idea that, apart from Moses, the Jews were originally native Egyptians.¹¹¹ Trogus’s account appears to describe how Moses formed the Jews as a nation from a group of Egyptian exiles and established their customs; Trogus may have based his claim that the Jews originated in Damascus on the ancestry of their founder, Moses.¹¹²

Strabo’s description of Judea in *Geography* book 16 incorporates an ethnography of the Jews. Although a mixed group of races/nations occupy the various parts of Judea,

109. 36.2.14 (Yardley, APA, 1994).

110. Bar-Kochva understands Trogus to make the stronger claim that “Jewish religious practices are...typically Egyptian” (Bar-Kochva 1996 214) and that “the Jews observe Egyptian cults” (Bar-Kochva 2010 489 n. 58). Stern and Feldman each link Trogus’s mention of the Egyptian *sacra* with Exodus (Stern I: 340, cf. Ex 12.35–36; Feldman 1993 279, cf. Ex 3:21–22, Ex 11:2–3), however, it is not clear that Trogus would have known the Pentateuch. On gentile knowledge of the LXX before the second century CE, see page 153 n. 160.

111. Trogus may have mentioned specific Jewish customs which Justin has omitted, but this is unknowable.

112. Bar-Kochva notes that it was standard practice in Greek literature after the sixth and seventh centuries BCE to attribute to a legendary founder the establishment of a city and its legislation (Bar-Kochva 2010 120–121 and the literature cited there). Pompeius Trogus comments in the proem that his goal is making a comprehensive history of Greece available in Latin.

Justin’s epitome might have modified Trogus’s account of the Jews’ origins, but this is an imponderable.

according to Strabo, the most trustworthy current report about the temple in Jerusalem claims that the ancestors of those now called Judeans were Egyptians (16.2.34). Moses, an Egyptian priest, having become disenchanted with Egyptian religious practice, led a not inconsiderable group of like-minded people to the site of what is now Jerusalem (16.2.35–36). Strabo twice reiterates the claim that the Jews were originally Egyptians. In his description of Egyptian practices in *Geogr.* 17.2.5, Strabo comments that the Jews are Egyptians, as he has already mentioned. *Antiquities* book 14 preserves a fragment of Strabo that describes the prevalence of Jews in the inhabited world around the time of Sulla's war against Mithridates. Having described the Jews' special quarter in Alexandria and their ethnarch, Strabo explains that the Jews have flourished in Alexandria because they were originally Egyptians (*Ant.* 14.118).¹¹³

Strabo provides less information about Jewish customs, but links some of them to Moses and Egypt. Moses departed Egypt because he rejected the Egyptian practice of representing the divine using images of beasts and cattle, and, instead, advocated abstaining from making images and worshipping without images of the divine (16.2.35). Subsequently, when superstitious people and then tyrants were appointed to the priesthood, superstition led to the Jews' habit of abstaining from foods, the practice of male and female circumcision, and similar customs (16.2.37). Thus, Strabo's account in book 16 specifically links the well-known Jewish practice of worshipping without images to Moses's Egyptian origins and his rejection of Egyptian customs,¹¹⁴ but ascribes

113. Chapter 5 B1 page 192 ff. examines this passage in the context of Josephus's account of the Jews' origins in *Antiquities*.

114. Several Greek and Latin authors note the Jews' custom of worshipping without images, but do not link the practice to Egypt, cf. Hecataeus of Abdera (*Diod. Sic.* 40.3.4), Varro (*ap. August. De civ. D.*, 4.31 = Stern no. 72a), and Livy (*Scholia in Lucanum* 2.593 = Stern no. 133). However, Tacitus contrasts this Jewish habit with

other customs, including circumcision, to later priests, which may suggest that these later customs are not Egyptian. By contrast, in book 17, Strabo concludes his account of the Egyptian practice of male and female circumcision by noting that it is also a custom among the Jews, who are also Egyptians by origin (17.2.5).

Tacitus's ethnographic excursus on the Jews in *Histories* book 5 is the longest and most detailed account of the Jews to survive from antiquity.¹¹⁵ Tacitus places the excursus before his account of Titus's conquest of Jerusalem, noting that, as he is about to describe the end of a famous city, he will describe its origins.¹¹⁶ The sequel assumes that the origins of Jerusalem are coextensive with the origins of the Jews. Tacitus offers six alternative versions of Jewish origins (*Hist.* 5.2–3), before expanding the sixth version with a discussion of Jewish customs (*Hist.* 5.4–5).

Three of Tacitus's six versions link the Jews' origins with Egypt.¹¹⁷ The second account notes that, during the reign of Isis, a multitude led by Hierosolymus and Iuda was discharged into neighboring lands. Tacitus somewhat elusively describes the multitude as *exundantem per Aegyptum multitudinem* (5.2.2), which could mean a group of people flowing through Egypt, in which case their origin would be unclear, or it could refer to Egypt's own overflowing population, as both the Loeb and Budé understand this

Egyptian practice (Tac. *Hist.* 5.5.4); see below page 143.

115. Bar-Kochva comments that it is the best known and most detailed ancient ethnography of the Jews (Bar-Kochva 1996 215).

116. On this formulaic type of opening, see page 118 n. 20 above.

117. Tacitus's first version links the Jews to Crete, the third to Ethiopia, and the fifth identifies the Jews with the Solymi in Homer.

phrase, which would make the Jews originally Egyptian.¹¹⁸ Tacitus's fourth version of Jewish origins describes them as a people from Assyria who lacked land and took possession of parts of Egypt before settling their own cities in "Hebrew lands" and parts of Syria (5.2.2).

Tacitus introduces his sixth and longest account of Jewish origins by attributing it to "most authors." When a wasting disease that defiled the body spread in Egypt, an oracle of Ammon advised King Bocchoris to purge the kingdom and carry off *id genus hominum*, hateful to the gods, into other lands (5.3.1). The meaning of this phrase turns on how one interprets *genus*, which can mean a "race" or "nation," or simply a "kind" or "sort." Both the Loeb and the Budé understand *id genus hominum* to mean "this race of men," which might imply that the group already had a separate corporate identity and, therefore, an earlier origin. Reading *id genus hominum* as "this sort of men" seems to define the group by their affliction and suggests that they were Egyptians.¹¹⁹

Once the crowd had been gathered and driven out, Moses, one of the exiles (*exsul*), warned the group not to hope for help from gods or men, but to rely only on themselves (5.3.1). Tacitus often uses *exsul* to describe a Roman exiled from the city;¹²⁰ thus, his description of Moses may imply that Moses was an Egyptian. By following a

118. According to Diodorus Siculus, the Egyptians claim that overpopulation was one reason their ancestors sent out colonies (Diod. Sic. 1.29.5). Other ancient authors commented on Egypt's populousness, see Stern II: 33 and the sources cited there. Feldman, improbably, connects this statement with Ex. 1:7 (Feldman 1991 346–347).

119. Bar-Kochva notes that Tacitus's account does not specify whether they are Egyptians (Bar-Kochva 2010 329).

120. Used to describe Tiberius (*Ann.* 1.4, 6.51); Vulcacius Moschus (*Ann.* 4.43); Agrippina (*Ann.* 12.22); Octavia (*Ann.* 14.63); Antistius Socianus (*Ann.* 16.14); those driven into exile by Nero (*Hist.* 1.4); Licinius Mucianus (*Hist.* 1.10); Piso (*Hist.* 1.48); Cerialis, describing himself (*Hist.* 5.24).

herd of wild asses to water, Moses saved the group from death and, after a six day march, they seized a country from its inhabitants, founded a city, and built a temple on the seventh day (5.3.2).

Having introduced Moses in his sixth version of Jewish origins, Tacitus begins his discussion of Jewish customs in *Hist.* 5.4–5 by commenting that Moses established new rites contrary to those of other peoples (5.4.1).¹²¹ In keeping with ethnographic practice, Tacitus uses the Jews' origins to explain their customs. The Jews avoid pork because that animal suffers from a skin disease similar to one that affected the Jews' ancestors in Egypt (5.4.2). Tacitus links some Jewish customs to their journey out of Egypt: the Jews dedicated a statue of an ass because a herd of asses led the Jews to water (5.4.2). The Jews rest on the seventh day because that day ended their labors, which probably refers to their six day journey (5.4.3). Tacitus contrasts other Jewish customs with those of the Egyptians: Jews sacrifice a ram in derision of Ammon and an ox because the Egyptians worship Apis (5.4.2).

Tacitus divides his account of Jewish customs in two by commenting in *Hist.* 5.5.1 that the customs he has already discussed are defended by their antiquity, while other customs persist because of their depravity. However, Tacitus also links these later customs with Egypt. Following Egyptian practice, Tacitus remarks, the Jews handle corpses with care and bury bodies rather than burning them (5.5.3). The Jews have the same ideas about the lower regions as the Egyptians, but different views about divine matters (5.5.3). The Egyptians worship animals and “monstrous images,” while the Jews regard images as impious and worship a god incapable of representation (5.5.4). Tacitus

121. Cf. Hdt. 2.35.2: “[The Egyptians] have...instituted customs and laws contrary for the most part to those of the rest of mankind” (Godley, LCL).

also comments on the Jews' character, noting that they hate outsiders, avoid eating or sleeping with outsiders, and circumcise themselves in order to be different from other peoples (5.5.2). Tacitus's account may imply that these Jewish character traits originated in Moses's warning to the exiles to trust only in themselves, not in gods or men (5.3.1).

Apart from the alternative explanations Tacitus offers for the Jewish practice of resting on the seventh day and year, which he links to Saturn (5.4.4), and two practices whose origins are unclear,¹²² Tacitus explains each of the Jewish customs he mentions by linking them to his sixth account of the Jews' origins, which describes them as exiled Egyptians.¹²³

In *Against Apion*, Josephus cites Manetho in the section on the Jews' antiquity to prove that the Jews were not originally Egyptian (*Ap.* 1.73–105), and then refutes accounts of Jewish origins in Egypt by Manetho (*Ap.* 1.227–287), Chaeremon (*Ap.* 1.288–303), Lysimachus (*Ap.* 1.304–320), and Apion (*Ap.* 2.10–32) in the section *Apion* on slanders. These passages survive only in Josephus's citations in *Apion*, which may suggest that, although Josephus thought these authors merited a rebuttal, they were less widely read than the other authors cited above.¹²⁴ Their failure to survive could also be due to chance.

122. The Jews' reject infanticide and believe that souls killed in battle or by an executioner are immortal (5.5.3).

123. See the summary in Table 2, page 157.

124. The accounts of Jewish origins in Diodorus Siculus books 34/35 and 40 interested Photius because he was Christian. However, it is unlikely that the extant accounts of Jewish origins in Diodorus Siculus, book 1, Strabo, Pompeius Trogus, and Tacitus survive because they mention the Jews.

In the section of *Apion* on the Jews' antiquity, Josephus's first piece of evidence is Manetho's account of the Hycsos, a people of obscure γένοϋ from the East, who invaded and ruled Egypt before being driven out and building Jerusalem (*Ap.* 1.75–90). Josephus identifies the Hycsos as "our ancestors" (*Ap.* 1.91, 103) and emphasizes that Manetho's account proves that the Jews arrived in Egypt from elsewhere (*Ap.* 1.104), a point Josephus reiterates later (*Ap.* 1.288). Although Josephus leaves the reader to draw the obvious inference that the Jews were not originally Egyptians, he subsequently makes this conclusion explicit (*Ap.* 1.252, 278).¹²⁵

Josephus begins his refutation of slanders against the Jews by disproving a different account of Manetho's. Both before and after recounting Manetho's story, Josephus observes that Manetho is trying to mix the Jews up with a group of lepers who were banished from Egypt (*Ap.* 1.229, 253). According to Josephus, Manetho reports that a group of lepers and maimed people were sent to Auaris, the Hycsos' former capital, in an effort to cleanse Egypt; they appealed to the Hycsos in Jerusalem for help, and were then driven out of Egypt (*Ap.* 1.230–250). Josephus argues that the lepers must have died in the desert, and that Manetho had therefore proven that the Jews were not originally Egyptian (*Ap.* 1.278). Josephus's comments suggest that Manetho maintained that the Jews had Egyptian origins.

Josephus next turns to Chaeremon's account of a series of expulsions from Egypt, including his claim that Raamses drove out 200,000 Jews from Egypt to Syria (*Ap.* 1.288–292). Josephus's replies that Chaeremon has failed to specify which of the expelled groups were Egyptians by γένοϋ and which were Jews (*Ap.* 1.298, 302).

125. Chapter 5 C2, page 212 ff., examines in detail Josephus's argument in *Apion* that the Jews were not Egyptian by origin.

Josephus's answer again implies that Chaeremon claimed that the Jews were originally Egyptians.

Lysimachus' version of the Jews' origin, even in the account Josephus provides in indirect statement, is explicit: "the people of the Jews" (*Ap.* 1.305) were expelled by King Bocchoris and led to Judea by Moses (*Ap.* 1.304–311). Josephus replies in a stream of rhetorical questions to attack the idea that either "the people of the Jews" or Moses were native Egyptians (*Ap.* 1.314, 317), which suggests that Lysimachus maintained that the Jews were originally Egyptian.

Josephus introduces Apion's account of the Jews' origins in Egypt by pointing out that he has already proved that the Jews were neither Egyptian by γένοϋς nor were expelled on account of disease (*Ap.* 2.8). According to Apion, Moses led a group of lepers, the blind, and the maimed out of Egypt to Judea. (*Ap.* 2.10–21). Josephus replies that Apion falsely claimed that the Jews were Egyptian by γένοϋς because Apion himself falsely claimed *not* to be Egyptian, thereby admitting the depravity of his own origins (*Ap.* 2.28–30).¹²⁶

Although Josephus knew that Strabo claimed that the Jews were originally Egyptian (*Ant.* 14.118), Josephus does not cite and refute Strabo's account in the section on slanders in *Against Apion*.¹²⁷ Instead, Josephus appears to focus solely on authors he can claim or imply were Egyptians, probably in order to play on negative Roman attitudes towards Egypt and Egyptians.¹²⁸ In the introduction to the section on slanders,

126. Josephus claims that Apion was originally Egyptian in his replies to Apion's comments about the temple and Jewish customs (*Ap.* 2.41, 2. 138).

127. Josephus cites Strabo in *Ap.* 2.84 in a list of historians who testify that impecuniosity drove Antiochus to plunder the temple.

128. On the Romans' negative stereotypes about Egypt, see Chapter 4 A2 page 164 ff.

Josephus specifies that the slanders against the Jews originated with the Egyptians, and that certain people set themselves to falsifying the truth in order to gratify the Egyptians (*Ap.* 1.223). In the section of *Apion* on the Jews' antiquity, Josephus identifies Manetho as an Egyptian by γένος (*Ap.* 1.73) and notes that he worked from Egyptian writings (*Ap.* 1.104–105). In the section on slanders, Josephus again reports that Manetho translated the history of Egypt from the Egyptian sacred books (*Ap.* 1.228), which suggests that Manetho may be one of the Egyptians who are a source of slanders against the Jews. Josephus introduces Chaeremon as a writer who claims to write Egyptian history, like Manetho, which may imply that he was Egyptian (*Ap.* 1.288). Chaeremon was probably well known in Rome as an Egyptian sacred scribe and in need of no more specific introduction.¹²⁹ Josephus moves on to Lysimachus without providing any information about him (*Ap.* 1.304).¹³⁰ Lysimachus' account begins with an Egyptian king (*Ap.* 1.305) and Josephus opens his reply to Lysimachus by referring to Manetho and Chaeremon (*Ap.* 1.312). By placing him in a list of "Egyptian" authors, Josephus may have wanted his audience to conclude that Lysimachus was also Egyptian.¹³¹ Josephus thrice accuses Apion of being an Egyptian (*Ap.* 2.28–30, 41, 128).

129. See van der Horst 1984 and Barclay 2007 153 n. 973.

130. Ἐπεισάξω δὲ... Λυσίμαχον, *Ap.* 1.304. As Barclay notes, the language evokes the theatre (Barclay 2007 158 n. 1018). "I will next introduce Lysimachus" (Thackeray, LCL).

131. As Barclay also comments (Barclay 2007 158 n. 1018). Because Lysimachus's ideas are similar to Manetho's, Goodman notes that it is reasonable to assume that Lysimachus was Egyptian (Schürer–Vermes III.1: 600–601).

C. Silence about the Jews' Servitude in Egypt in Greek and Latin Authors

Although many pre-second century CE Greek and Latin authors know of the Jews' origins in Egypt, and most of them discuss the role of Moses, no extant source mentions the Jews' servitude in Egypt. Two authors appear to be more informed than the others and include specific details of the Pentateuchal story of Jews' journey to and from Egypt. In his ethnographic excursus on the Jews, Pompeius Trogus reports that Joseph, the youngest son of Israhel, was sold by his brothers to merchants who took him into Egypt (36.32.7). Trogus also notes that Moses occupied Mount Sinai after departing Egypt with the exiles (36.2.14). However, Trogus describes the Jews as people with mangle and leprosy, not as slaves (36.2.12). According to Josephus, Apion reports that Moses went up Mount Sinai and remained for forty days, then returned and gave the Jews their laws (*Ap.* 2.25). Josephus implies that Apion describes the Jews who departed Egypt as "the lepers, the blind, and the lame" (*Ap.* 2.15), but does not mention their servitude.

Two pre-second century CE sources describe the Jews as slaves, but these are not references to the Jews' national servitude in Egypt. In a passing comment in *De provinciis consularibus*, a speech given in 56 BCE to support the distribution of powers decided by the triumvirate at Luca, Cicero calls Jews and Syrians "nations born to be slaves."¹³² Cicero's goal in this section of the speech is not recounting Jewish history, but disparaging Gabinius and arguing for his removal from the governorship of Syria. Cicero probably means that Jews and Syrians are "born to be slaves" metaphorically as being

132. *Nationibus natis servituti*, Cic. *Prov. cons.* 5.10 (Gardner, LCL). On the context of the speech, see Usher 2008 96–100.

destined to be subject to Rome politically, and this trope appears in other Roman authors.¹³³ According to Josephus, Apion argues that the Jews’ status as “slaves, first of one nation, then of another” and the disasters that have happened to Jerusalem prove that Jewish laws are unjust and that Jews do not worship God properly (*Ap.* 2.125).¹³⁴ Josephus understands Apion’s comment to refer to the Jews’ status as a people subject to foreign rule and comments that many peoples, including the Egyptians, have been “reduced...to servitude beneath a foreign yoke” (*Ap.* 2.127).¹³⁵

Celsus, writing long after Josephus in the late second century CE with a good knowledge of Christian traditions, is the earliest, extant pagan source who seems to have known of the Jews’ own story of their servitude in Egypt.¹³⁶ In addition to describing the followers of Moses as shepherds and goatherds,¹³⁷ a detail consistent with Gen 46.31–47.6,¹³⁸ Celsus claims that “the Jews were runaway slaves (δραπέτης) who escaped from Egypt.”¹³⁹ As part of his polemic against Christianity, Celsus also describes the Jews as

133. Livy described Syrians and Asiatic Greeks as *servituti nati* (Liv. 36.27.5); cf. App. *B. Civ.* 2.74. Stern comments that Cicero may have had in mind Jewish slaves brought to Rome by Pompey (Stern I: 204), but this would not explain Cicero’s reference to Syrians. See also the discussion of *Prov. cons.* 5.10 in Chapter 6, page 241.

134. Thackeray, LCL.

135. Thackeray, LCL. Josephus’s substantial reply, which occupies *Ap.* 2.126–134, ends by comparing the Jews’ subjugation of other nations under David, Solomon, and the (unnamed) Hasmoneans with the Egyptians’ servitude to the Persians and Macedonians (*Ap.* 2.132–134). Josephus describes the Jew’s political subjugation in both *War* and *Antiquities* as δουλεία, see Chapter 7 A page 283 and n. 10, Chapter 7 B page 286, and Table 7 page 309.

On Apion’s knowledge of the exodus and whether Josephus omitted references to slavery in *Against Apion*, See also Chapter 7 C, page 306.

136. Chadwick dates Celsus’s Ἀληθῆς λόγος to 177–180 CE (Chadwick 1965 xxiv–xxix).

137. Origen *C. Cels.* I.23, 24.

138. Stern notes the connection with Gen 47.3 (Stern II: 294).

139. Origen *C. Cels.* IV.31, 32; trans. Chadwick 1965.

Egyptians by γένος who revolted against the Egyptian community and disparaged their religious practices, and comments that the Jews similarly suffered a revolt by the followers of Jesus who introduced new ideas.¹⁴⁰

The absence of references in these non-Jewish sources to the Jews' servile origins is surprising since the collective enslavement of a people was well known in antiquity, and would not have struck ancient authors as unusual. Ancient sources describe at least ten such slave peoples.¹⁴¹ Often very little is known about these groups apart from their names, which usually appear together in lists.¹⁴² While the precise status and origins of these peoples is obscure, the extant sources suggest that the Helots, Mariandyni, and Penestae existed as separate peoples before being enslaved. Hellanikos of Lesbos (fifth century BCE) comments that the Helots were not by birth the slaves (δοῦλος) of the Spartans, but those people inhabiting the city of Helos who were first to be subdued.¹⁴³ Similarly, Ephorus (fourth century BCE) reports that the Helots were the inhabitants of Helos, seized by force in war and condemned as slaves (δοῦλος).¹⁴⁴ Thucydides,

140. Origen *C. Cels.* III.5; cf. III.6.

141. See the list in Table 3, page 159 at the end of this chapter. Ancient sources use several terms to describe the slaves of the Cretans. If each term identifies a separate group, ancient sources refer to thirteen slave nations.

142. See, for example Philip of Theangela (3rd C BCE?) *FGrH* 741F2 = Ath. 6.271b (Helots, Penestae, Leleges); Callistratus (3rd–2nd C BCE) *FGrH* 348F4 = Ath. 6.263ef (Helots, Penestae, Chlarotae); Pl. *Leg.* 776cd (Helots, Mariandyni, Penestae). Later authors seem to have enjoyed reporting long lists of slave peoples. See, for example, Pollox *Onom.* III.83 (Helots, Penestae, Chlarotae, Mnoans, Dorophoroi-Mariandyni, Gymnetes, Corynephoroi). For a discussion of lists of slave peoples, see Ducat 1990 31–44.

143. *FGrH* 4F188.

144. *FGrH* 70F117 = Str. 8.5.4.

however, claims that the Helots were Messenians enslaved (δουλόω) in ancient times.¹⁴⁵

Theopompus appears to combine these two traditions and notes that the Helots, who have been enslaved (καταδουλόω) for a long time already, were partly Messenians and partly the previous inhabitants of Helos.¹⁴⁶

According to Theopompus, the Milesians compelled the Mariandyni, who occupied the area of Heracleia before the Milesians founded the city, to serve as Helots.¹⁴⁷ Posidonius reports that the Mariandyni voluntarily submitted to the Heracleots by “promising to be their slaves (θητεύω) forever.”¹⁴⁸ Theopompus also relates that the Thessalians furnished themselves with slaves, known as Penestae, from the previous inhabitants of the territory they controlled, the Perrhaebians and Magnesians.¹⁴⁹

Archemachus (third century BCE) reports that the Penestae are Boeotian inhabitants of Arnae who voluntarily surrendered themselves as slaves to the Thessalians (δουλεύω).¹⁵⁰

Each of these accounts specifies that the Helots, Mariandyni, or Penestae were enslaved. Plato’s discussion of slavery in *Laws* confirms that these groups were chattel slaves, not subject peoples described as metaphorical slaves. In a section in *Laws* on the

145. Thuc. 1.101.2.

146. *FGrH* 115F113 = Ath. 6.272a. Theopompus also claimed that the Spartans constructed their Helot slave-corps from the Achaeans (*FGrH* 115F122 = Ath. 6.265bc).

147. *FGrH* 115F388 = Str. 12.3.4.

148. *FGrH* 87F8 = Ath. 6.263cd; Olson, LCL. θητεύω can also mean “to be a serf/ laborer” (LSJ s.v. θητεύω). Posidonius justifies the Mariandyni’s voluntary surrender by noting that they were unable to manage themselves due their their weak intellects, which comes very close to claiming that they were Aristotelian natural slaves, as Swain notes (Swain 2013 260). On the natural slavery of nations, see Chapter 6 A2a. Evidently, the Mariandyni were not so weak-minded as not to see the benefits of voluntary slavery. Dowden comments that Posidonius’ account is consistent with other self-justifying myths of colonization (Dowden 2014).

149. *FGrH* 115F122 = Ath. 6.265bc.

150. *FGrH* 424F1 = Ath. 6.264ab.

proper way for a young man to marry and set up a household, the discussion turns to the issue of chattels (κτήματα).¹⁵¹ The Athenian interlocutor, having observed that slaves present many difficulties, comments that the problem of the Helots is the most puzzling issue in Greek life, and notes that there is a similar controversy about the Mariandyni's servitude (δουλεία) to the Heracleots and the Penstae class of the Thessalians.¹⁵² Observing that one ought to obtain the most agreeable and best slaves (δοῦλος) possible,¹⁵³ the Athenian then discusses the proper treatment of slaves.¹⁵⁴

Knowledge of the Jews' servitude in Egypt would probably have influenced ethnographic accounts of their customs and character. The extant ethnographies use particular details of the Jews' origins to explain specific practices. According to Pompeius Trogus, Moses established the seventh day as a day of fasting because that day marked the end of the Jews' wandering in the desert (36.3.14). Trogus also notes that, because the fear of contagion caused the Jews' expulsion from Egypt, the Jews avoid contact with strangers (36.2.15). Tacitus explains that the Jews abstain from pork as a consequence of the plague of scabies they suffered in Egypt (*Hist.* 5.4.2). Similarly, he claims that the Jews dedicated a shrine with a statue of an ass because a herd of wild asses led them to water during their migration from Egypt (*Hist.* 5.4.2).¹⁵⁵ Tacitus also notes that the Jews rest on the seventh day because that day ended their toils (5.4.3)—a reference to the Jews' six day journey from Egypt and founding of a city on the seventh

151. Pl. *Leg.* 776b.

152. Pl. *Leg.* 776cd.

153. Pl. *Leg.* 776d.

154. The discussion of slaves runs from *Leg.* 776b through 778a and uses the terms δοῦλος (776e; 777a, b, d, e; 778a) and οἰκέτης (777a, c, d, e; 778a).

155. *Hist.* 5.4.2 clearly refers to the herd of wild asses mentioned in *Hist.* 5.3.2.

day (5.3.2).

Aristotle's theory of natural slavery, to which the discussion of Philo in Chapter 2 refers and which Chapter 6 A1 describes in detail, holds that a slave has a servile nature.¹⁵⁶ This theory was very influential in the ancient world and was probably part of mainstream Roman thought.¹⁵⁷ Aristotle also notes that nations could deserve servitude, thus implying that an entire people could have a servile nature. This view probably lies behind Cicero's remark about the metaphorical servitude of the Jews and Syrians.¹⁵⁸ Thus, ancient ethnographers familiar with the Jews' servitude would probably not have failed to mention it had they known of it. It is striking that, in a much later period and in very different circumstances, Julian the Apostate attacks converts to Christianity by contrasting the sovereignty granted by god to Rome with the Jews' continuing servility: Abraham was an alien in a strange land, Jacob was a slave, *the Jews were slaves in Egypt* (emphasis added), and the Jews had subsequently been enslaved to the Assyrians, Medes, Persians, and Romans.¹⁵⁹

Although it is perilous to argue from silence in ancient sources, several factors might explain the silence of pre-second century CE sources on the Jews' servitude. Pagan authors might not have known the Jews' own story of their servitude in Egypt. This is consistent with the majority opinion in scholarship that non-Jews did not know the LXX.¹⁶⁰ Some sources may have known the story of the Jews' servitude, but have not

156. See Chapter 2 B3a page 113 and Chapter 6 A1 page 234.

157. On the ideology of natural slavery in Roman sources, see Chapter 6 A2 page 240 ff.

158. Arist. *Pol.* 1333b37 - 1334a2; Cic. *Prov. cons.* 5.10, discussed above on page 148.

159. Julian. *C. Gal.* 209de

160. Swete and Thackeray 1902 22; Nock 1933 79; Tcherikover 1956 177–178; Tcherikover 1959 363; Momigliano 1975 91; Gruen 1998a 62, 68. Feldman argues that authors from the second century BCE onward made use of the LXX, and suggests that

survived. Other authors may have known about the Jews' slavery, but chosen not to report it, thought allegations of (for example) leprosy were more damning, or thought servitude was not especially disparaging. Josephus, who appears deliberately to have omitted mentioning the Jews' servitude in Egypt at key points in *Antiquities*, might have eliminated references to it in the sources about Jewish origins that he cites in *Apion*.¹⁶¹ For sources extant outside of Josephus, ignorance of the LXX is the most likely explanation for their silence on the Jews' national servitude; Josephus suggests in *Ant.* 1.12–13 that he is writing for audience who do not know or have no complete account of Jewish history.¹⁶²

any author of a monograph on the Jews used the LXX—a view rightly challenged by Barclay (Feldman 1993 312–314; Feldman 1998a 124–125; Barclay 2004 141). Rajak and Barclay each argue that some pagans interested in Jews and Judaism may have referred to the LXX (Barclay 2004 141–142; Rajak 2009 258–270). Rajak suggests that an exodus “counter-history,” like Manetho’s, implies familiarity with the story being countered (Rajak 2009 262–263).

161. On Josephus’s treatment of the Jews’ national servitude, see Chapter 7, page 281 ff. Apion knows of Moses’s 40 days on Mt Sinai. Some scholars suggest that he knew the Exodus account; see Chapter 7 C page 306 and page 306 note 67.

162. Josephus’s comment could also be a rhetorical gesture to justify the writing of *Antiquities*. Josephus claims in *Ap.* 1.217 that the majority of Greek authors on the Jews have not read the Jews’ sacred books.

Table 1: Greek and Latin Authors on Jewish Origins¹⁶³

Name	Date	Primary Source	Secondary Source	Place of Origin	Portrayal of Jews
Hecataeus of Abdera (*)	c. 360–290 BCE		Diod. Sic. <i>Library</i> 40.3; Photius, Cod. 244	Foreigners	Strangers, foreigners, aliens. Moses led colony.
Clearchus of Soli	c. 300 BCE	<i>De somno</i>	<i>Ap.</i> 1.176-183	India	Descended from Indian philosophers
Manetho 1	3rd C BCE	<i>Aegyptiaca</i> , Book 2	<i>Ap.</i> 1.75-90	East	Men of obscure descent from the east, Hyccsos/shepherd-kings
		<i>Aegyptiaca</i> , other	<i>Ap.</i> 1.91		So-called shepherds, captives
Manetho 2	3rd C BCE	<i>Aegyptiaca?</i>	<i>Ap.</i> 1.228-251	Egypt	Leprous and ill Egyptians, Solymi shepherds + polluted Egyptians
Ptolemy of Mendes	2nd - 1st C BCE ?		Tatianus, <i>Oratio ad Graecos</i> , 38	-	“Departure of the Jews from Egypt”
			Clement of Alexandria, <i>Stromata</i> , I, 21:101:5	-	“Departure of the Jews from Egypt”
Lysimachus	2nd - 1st C BCE ?		<i>Ap.</i> 1.305-311	-	The people of the Jews with leprosy, scales, other illnesses (in Egypt)
			<i>Ap.</i> 2.16	-	Departure of the Jews from Egypt,
Diodorus 1	1st C BCE	<i>Library</i> 1.28.1-2		Egypt	Egyptian colonists (οἰκίζω)
		<i>Library</i> 1.55.5		Egypt	Egyptian colonists (ἀποίκιοι)
Diodorus 2	1st C BCE	<i>Library</i> 34-35 1.1-5	Photius, Cod. 244	Egypt	Impious, detested by gods, lepers. Statue of Moses (?) on ass in Temple.
Apollonius Molon	1st C BCE	<i>De Iudaeis</i>	Eusebius, <i>P.E.</i> 9.19.1-3	Armenia	The man who survived the flood. Mentions Moses .
	1st C BCE		<i>Ap.</i> 2.16	-	Departure of the Jews from Egypt,
Nicolaus of Damascus	c. 64 BCE - after 4 BCE	<i>Histories</i> , Book 4	<i>Ant.</i> 1.159	Chaldea	Abraham reigned in Damascus with an army from Chaldea
Strabo (*)	c. 64 BCE - 20s CE	<i>Historica Hypomnemata</i>	<i>Ant.</i> 14.118	Egypt	“The Jews were originally Egyptians”
		<i>Geographica</i> 16.2.34-39		Egypt	Ancestors of the “Judeans” were Egyptians. Moses led people to Jerusalem.
		<i>Geographica</i> 17.2.5		Egypt	The Jews were originally Egyptians, as noted previously

163. This table is adapted from a table in Barclay 2007 344.

Pompeius Trogus (*)	late 1st C BCE - beg 1st C CE		Epitome of Bk 36 in Justin	Damascus / Egypt	“[1] The origin of the Jews was from Damascus...[14] Moses reached Damascus...his ancestral home[.]” Moses & Egyptians with leprosy and scabies expelled.
Chaerephon	1st C CE	<i>Aegyptiaca Historia ?</i>	<i>Ap.</i> 1.288-292	Egypt	Contaminated, diseased Egyptians
Apion	1st C CE	<i>Aegyptiaca</i> , Book 3	<i>Ap.</i> 2.10-27	Egypt	Lepers, blind, and lame Egyptians led by Moses
Plutarch	1st -2nd C CE	<i>De Is. et Os.</i> 31 (<i>Mor.</i> 363D)		Egypt	Typhon/Set: father of Hierosolymus and Iudaeus
Tacitus 1	1st -2nd C CE	<i>Hist.</i> 5.2.1		Crete	Exiles from Crete settled in Libya
Tacitus 2		<i>Hist.</i> 5.2.2		Egypt	Superfluous population of Egypt, led by Hierosolymus and Iuda
Tacitus 3		<i>Hist.</i> 5.2.2		Ethiopia	“An Ethiopian stock”
Tacitus 4		<i>Hist.</i> 5.2.3		Assyria	Assyrian refugees, controlled part of Egypt
Tacitus 5		<i>Hist.</i> 5.2.3		-	Solymi from Homer founded Hierosolyma
Tacitus 6 (*)		<i>Hist.</i> 5.3.1-4.1		Egypt?	“This race...hated by gods”, disfigured bodies; reign of Kg Bocchorus, practices opposed to those of other religions. Moses led exiles.
Celsus	2nd C CE		Origen <i>C. Cels.</i> 1.23-24	-	Followers of Moses : goatherds and shepherds
			Origen <i>C. Cels.</i> 3.5-6	Egypt	Jews are Egyptian by race, rebelled, despised religious customs
			Origen <i>C. Cels.</i> 4.31, 33	?	“Jews are runaway slaves who escaped from Egypt”
* = Ethnographic Excursus					

Table 2: Tacitus on Jewish Practices

	Practice	Hist	Origin of Practice	Migration	Origin: Egypt	Origin Crete	Character	Unclear /Other
1	Statue of creature who put an end to their wandering (= ass)	4.2	Migration	1				
2	Sacrifice a ram in derision of Ammon	4.2	Egyptian origin		1			
3	Offer an ox b/c Egyptians worship Apis	4.2	Egyptian origin		1			
4	Abstain from pork b/c of scabies plague	4.2	cf. 3.1 “during a plague in Egypt” - Egyptian origin		1			
5	Frequent fasts b/c of “long hunger”	4.3	Unclear. 3.2 speaks of thirst not hunger, but probably due to migration	1				
6	Unleavened Jewish bread: haste in seizing grain	4.3	Unclear. 3.1 does not mention haste or grain, but linked to “long hunger”					1
7	Resting on 7th day: “that day ended their toils”	4.3	Migration. Reference to 6 day journey through the desert, 7th day conquering land, cf. 3.2.	1				
			Alternative: Cretan origin (Idaei)			1		
			Alternative: Saturn highest of seven planets / paths have multiples of seven.					1
8	Resting on 7th year	4.3	Migration. Reference to 6 day journey through the desert, 7th day conquering land, cf. 3.2.	1				
		4.4	Alternative: Cretan origin (Idaei)			1		
		4.4	Alternative: Saturn highest of seven planets / paths have multiples of seven.					1
9	Loyal to each other, hate outsiders	5.1	Character, cf. 3.1				1	
10	Sit apart at meals	5.2	Character, cf. 3.1				1	
11	No intercourse with foreign women	5.2	Character, cf. 3.1				1	
12	Nothing is unlawful among themselves	5.2	Character, cf. 3.1				1	
13	Circumcision to differ from other peoples	5.2	Character, cf. 3.1				1	
14	Try to increase numbers by not killing children	5.3	Unclear					1
15	Souls killed in battle by executioner are immortal	5.3	Unclear					1
16	Bury a corpse rather than burn “following E customs”	5.3	Egyptian origin		1			

17	“Likewise” bestow care on the dead	5.3	Egyptian origin		1			
18	“Same belief about world below”	5.3	Egyptian origin		1			
19	Egyptians worship many animals and images; Jews: one god, no images	5.3	Egyptian origin		1			
	Totals in each category			4	7	2	5	5

Legend: Lines 1–19 list a Jewish custom Tacitus identifies. Column four assigns each custom to a cause, either to the Jews’ origins in Egypt (or Crete), to the circumstances of their migration from Egypt, or to their character—also formed by their migration. The columns on the right assign each custom to a cause and the last row provides the total number of Jewish practices which Tacitus assigns to a given cause.

Table 3: Enslaved Nations Known in Antiquity

Slave Nation	Enslaving Nation	Source	Secondary Source
Aphamiotae	Cretans	Dosiadas (<i>FGrH</i> 458F3)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.264a
		Sosicrates, <i>Cretan History</i> , book 2 (<i>FGrH</i> 461F4)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.263f
		Strabo <i>Geogr.</i> 15.1.34	
Bythinians	Byzantines	Phylarchus, <i>Histories</i> , book 6 (<i>FGrH</i> 81F8)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.271bc
Callichyrioi	Syracusans	Pausanias the Atticist, K:9, K:33	
Chlarotae	Cretans	Callistratus (<i>FGrH</i> 348F4)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.263e
		Ephorus, <i>Histories</i> , book 3 (<i>FGrH</i> 70F29)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.263f
		Pausanias the Atticist, K:33	
		Pollux, <i>Onom.</i> 3.83	
Corynephoroï	Sicilians	Pollux, <i>Onom.</i> 3.83	
Gymnetes	Argives	Pollux, <i>Onom.</i> 3.83	
Helots	Spartans	Antiochus of Syracuse (<i>FGrH</i> 555F13)	Strabo, <i>Geogr.</i> 6.3.2
		Aristotle, <i>Pol.</i> 1269ab; 1264a 32–35 (does not specify Spartans), 1271b 40–1272a 2	
		Callistratus (<i>FGrH</i> 348F4)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.263e
		Ephorus (<i>FGrH</i> 70F117)	Strabo, <i>Geogr.</i> 8.5.4
		Hellanikos of Lesbos (<i>FGrH</i> 4F188)	Valerius Harpocration
		Pausanias, <i>Descr.</i> 3.20.6	
		Pausanias the Atticist, K:9, K:33	
		Philip of Theangela, <i>On the Carians and the Leleges</i> (<i>FGrH</i> 741F2)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.271b
		Phylarchus, <i>Histories</i> , book 6 (<i>FGrH</i> 81F8)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.271bc
		Plato, <i>Leg.</i> 776cd	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.264de
		Plutarch, <i>Lyc.</i> 2, 28	
		Pollux, <i>Onom.</i> 3.83	
		Strabo, <i>Geogr.</i> 12.3.4; 15.1.34	
		Theopompus, <i>Histories</i> 17 (<i>FGrH</i> 115F122)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.265bc

		Theopompus, <i>Hellenica</i> , book 7 (FGrH 115F13)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.272a
		Theopompus, <i>Philippics</i> , book 2 (FGrH 115F40)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.271e
		Thucydides, <i>Hist.</i> 1.101.2	
Leleges	Carians	Philip of Theangela, <i>On the Carians and the Leleges</i> (FGrH 741F2)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.271b
Mariandyni	Heracleians/Milesians	Callistratus (FGrH 348F4)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.263e
		Pausanias the Atticist, K:33	
		Plato, <i>Leg.</i> 776cd	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.264de
		Pollux, <i>Onom.</i> 3.83	
		Posidonius, <i>Histories</i> , book 11 (FGrH 87F8)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.263d
		Strabo, <i>Geogr.</i> 12.3.4	
		Theopompus (FGrH 115F388)	Strabo, <i>Geogr.</i> 12.3.4
Mnoans	Cretans	Dosiadas (FGrH 458F3)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.264a
		Sosicrates, <i>Cretan History</i> , book 2 (FGrH 461F4)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.263f
		Strabo, <i>Geogr.</i> 12.3.4	
Penestae	Thessalians	Archemachus, <i>Euboica</i> , book 3 (FGrH 424F1)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.264ab
		Aristotle, <i>Pol.</i> 1269ab, 1264a 32–35 (does not specify Thessalians)	
		Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.264a	
		Callistratus (FGrH 348F4)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.263e
		Philip of Theangela, <i>On the Carians and the Leleges</i> (FGrH 741F2)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.271b
		Philocrates, <i>Thessalica</i> , book 2 (FGrH 601F2)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.264a
		Plato, <i>Leg.</i> 776cd	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.264de
		Pollux, <i>Onom.</i> 3.83	
		Strabo, <i>Geogr.</i> 12.3.4	
		Theopompus, <i>Histories</i> , book 17 (FGrH 115F122)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.265bc
Perioikoi	Cretans	Aristotle, <i>Pol.</i> 1271b 40–1272a 2	
		Dosiadas (FGrH 458F3)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.264a
		Sosicrates (FGrH 461F4)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.263f
Proselatai	Ardiaecans	Theopompus, <i>Philippics</i> , book 2 (FGrH 115F40)	Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i> 6.271e, 10.443ab

Chapter 4 - Anti-Egyptian Prejudice in First Century CE Rome

Introduction

Several Greek and Latin authors thought the Jews were Egyptian by origin, as Chapter 3 demonstrates, including Josephus's younger contemporary Tacitus who explains the Jews' contemporary customs by reference to their Egyptian origins.¹ Josephus, who cites Strabo on the Jews' Egyptian origins (*Ant.* 14.114–118), certainly knew that some authors placed the Jews' national origins in Egypt.² Chapter 3 also shows that an ancient audience would have expected the Jews' (putative) Egyptian origins to explain their character and customs.³ Hence, since Egyptians figure prominently in Greek and Roman literature, preconceptions about Egyptians will have shaped what a Roman audience thought about Jews. This chapter explores first Greek, then Roman, stereotypes about Egyptians, and considers Josephus's own ambivalent attitudes towards Egyptians.

1. For Tacitus's explanation of Jewish customs, see Chapter 3 B page 143 ff. and Table 2 page 157.

2. On Strabo's account of Jewish origins, see Chapter 3 B page 139 f.

3. Chapter 3A page 121 ff.

A. Hostility to Egyptians in First Century CE Rome

(1) Greek Attitudes Towards Egyptians

Taken together, Greek sources present an ambivalent picture of Egyptians. Herodotus describes Egypt at length because it has the most wonders and customs that differ from those of the rest of mankind.⁴ He presents Egypt favorably as ancient, wise, and the source of much Greek knowledge and many practices. The Egyptians paid great attention to the past, according to Herodotus, and were the most skilled at history;⁵ his Egyptian sources claimed that they were the second oldest people on earth.⁶ For Herodotus, the Egyptians' antiquity proved that they were the first to hold solemn assemblies and processions, and that the Greeks learned these practices from them.⁷ The Greeks learned the names of nearly all of the Gods from Egypt,⁸ as well as the worship of Dionysus⁹ and the celebration of the Thesmophoria.¹⁰ Herodotus also believed that the Greeks were indebted to the Egyptians in science and law, and claimed that the Greeks had learned the art of measuring land¹¹ and the practice of an annual tax census¹² from them. Although Herodotus's Egyptian sources asserted that the Egyptians were the first to construct a yearly calendar divided into twelve months, Herodotus himself declares

4. Hdt. 2.35.1-2.

5. Hdt. 2.77.

6. The Egyptians admitted that the Phrygians were older (Hdt. 2.1-5).

7. Hdt. 2.58.

8. Hdt. 2.50-52.

9. Hdt. 2.49.

10. Hdt. 2.171.

11. Hdt. 2.109.

12. Hdt. 2.177.

the Egyptian calendar superior the Greek one.¹³ Herodotus also portrays Egyptians as very pious, describing them as the most god-fearing of men¹⁴ and noting their strictness about not desecrating temples.¹⁵ Plutarch derided Herodotus's portrayal of the Egyptians as the most pious and just of peoples and mocked Herodotus as philo-barbarian.¹⁶

Beyond Herodotus, Greek literature often depicts Egypt and Egyptians using negative stereotypes which recur in Roman authors.¹⁷ Aeschylus describes Egyptians as licentious and lewd.¹⁸ Polybius characterizes Egyptians as quick-tempered and savage when describing how natives bit, stabbed, and tore limb from limb the unfortunate family of Agathocles.¹⁹ As a result of their temper, according to Polybius, native Egyptians were unsuited to civic life.²⁰ Aristophanes and, before him, Cratinus use the verb *αιγυπτιαζω* to mean acting deceitfully like an Egyptian.²¹ Plato observes that Egyptians loved money²² and were inhospitable to strangers.²³ The Egyptians' negative character traits could be infectious: Polybius attributes the undoing of Ptolemy VI Philometor to a certain Egyptian profligacy and laziness.²⁴ Like Herodotus, Plato recognizes that Egyptian civilization was ancient and a source of wisdom, but also

13. Hdt. 2.4.

14. Hdt. 2.37.

15. Hdt. 2.64.

16. Plut. *Her. Mal.* 12.

17. See the comprehensive account in Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984.

18. Aesch. *Suppl.* 741–742, 817–821.

19. Polyb. 15.33.

20. Polyb. *ap. Str.* 17.1.12.

21. Ar. *Thesm.* 921–22; Cratinus 378.

22. Pl. *Resp.* 436a.

23. Pl. *Leg.* 953D–E.

24. Polyb. 39.7.

devalues Egyptian knowledge and promotes a counter-narrative that makes the Greeks the source of Egyptian wisdom. Although Socrates notes that the Egyptian god Theuth invented mathematics, astronomy, and letters,²⁵ he then claims that the invention of letters was detrimental to mankind since it encouraged forgetfulness and gave only the appearance of wisdom, but not wisdom itself.²⁶ In Plato's *Timaeus*, an Egyptian explains to Solon that a lost and forgotten Athenian state had existed one-thousand years before Egypt from which Egypt had derived its learning, including law, cosmology, divination, and medicine.²⁷ The Egyptian worship of animals was also the butt of jokes in Greek literature. In *Gorgias*, Socrates comically swears by "the dog god of the Egyptians."²⁸ Athenaeus cites a passage from Anaxandrides' play "Island Cities" that lampoons animal worship as an essential difference between Greek and Egyptian customs: while an Egyptian worships the eel, the dog, and the cat as divinities, a Greek would happily eat the eel as a delicacy, beat the dog if it misbehaved, and skin the cat.²⁹

(2) Anti-Egyptian Stereotypes in First Century CE Rome

The sharply negative portrayals of Egypt and Egyptians in first century CE Roman literature probably reflect the influence of Octavian's depiction of his civil war with Antony in 32–30 BCE as a foreign war with Egypt. Syme described this account of the conflict—the "magnificent lie"—as the "birth-legend" and "foundation myth" of the Principate.³⁰ In 32 BCE, the Senate voted for war against Cleopatra rather than against

25. Pl. *Phaedr.* 274C–D.

26. Pl. *Phaedr.* 275B–C.

27. Pl. *Tim.* 21E–25D.

28. Pl. *Gorg.* 482B (Lamb, LCL).

29. Ath. 7.299f–300a.

30. Syme 1939 275, 297, 335.

Antony³¹ in order to portray him as a traitor for siding with a foreign power against Rome.³² As Dio observes, the declaration of war was only aimed in word at Cleopatra, but in deed at Antony.³³

After defeating Antony and Cleopatra's forces at Actium in 31 BCE and capturing Alexandria the following year, Octavian continued to portray the conflict as a foreign war. Although a triumph could only be celebrated for victory over a foreign enemy,³⁴ the Senate voted Octavian one triumph for the victory at Actium "as over Cleopatra" and another for his victory at Alexandria "as over Egypt," according to Cassius Dio's careful report.³⁵ Neither triumph mentioned Antony or the other Romans who had fought with him so as not to imply that it was fitting to celebrate their defeat.³⁶ Instead, Octavian's three successive days of triumphs in 29 BCE for Dalmatia, Actium, and Alexandria emphasized his victories over foreign powers.³⁷ The last triumph, for victory at Alexandria, was the most lavish of the three³⁸ and highlighted that Cleopatra was Octavian's foe: the procession included an effigy of Cleopatra lying on a couch so that, as Cassius Dio notes, she was also a part of the spectacle together with her children who marched in the triumph.³⁹

Public monuments and coinage also emphasized that Octavian had triumphed

31. Dio 50.4.4, 6.1; Plut. *Ant.* 60.1.

32. Dio 50.6.1.

33. Dio 50.4.4.

34. Gurval 1995 20; cf. Val. Max. 2.8.7.

35. Dio 51.19.1, 5.

36. Dio 51.19.5.

37. Gurval 1995, 28–29.

38. Dio 51.21.7.

39. Dio 51.21.8.

over a foreign enemy. After the triumphs, Octavian dedicated the Curia Julia and the new Senate chamber, and set up a statue of Victory decked out with spoil from Egypt.⁴⁰ Octavian also dedicated the Temple of Divus Julius, which was filled with Egyptian booty and decorated with the beaks of ships captured at Actium.⁴¹ Some denarii minted in Rome or Brundisium around 29–27 BCE bear the legend AEGYPTO CAPTA, emphasizing that Octavian had subdued Egypt, a foreign enemy.⁴² Even twenty years later, new monuments could refer back to Actium and Alexandria as victories over a foreign enemy. The centerpiece of the *Solarium Augusti*, dedicated in 10 BC, was a 30 meter high Egyptian obelisk which served as a pointer for a gigantic sundial. An inscription on the obelisk’s base referred to “victory over Egypt.”⁴³

Octavian’s presentation of his civil war with Antony as foreign war with Cleopatra and Egypt influenced the literature and visual art of the Augustan period significantly. Zanker argues that the nautical symbols of Actium formed the basis for a new visual language in imperial imagery.⁴⁴ For example, the Tritons adorning the pediment of the Temple of Saturn might have advertised the naval victory of Actium.⁴⁵

40. Dio 51.22.1–2.

41. Beaks: Dio 51.19.2; Egyptian spoil: Dio 51.22.2–3.

42. Sutherland and Carson 1984 no. 275a. Although identification of Actian motifs in coinage is disputed, Gurval agrees that the AEGYPTO CAPTA denarii refer to Octavian’s triumphs (Gurval 1995, 132). Cf. also Gurval’s discussion of Actium coin types, Gurval 1995 47–65.

43. Zanker 1988 144. Zanker notes that the shadow cast by the obelisk pointed to the nearby *Ara Pacis Augustae* on Augustus’s birthday. Galinsky dismisses this as speculative (Galinsky 1996, 146).

44. Zanker 1988, 84.

45. Zanker 1988 81. This nautical imagery could also have referred to Octavian’s victory over Sextus Pompeius at Naulochus in 36 BCE. On Actium and nautical imagery, see Gurval 1995 *passim*.

Smelik and Hemelrijk maintain that the negative portrayals of Cleopatra in Augustan poetry reflect official “propaganda.”⁴⁶ Although Gurval warns against assuming that views of Actium remained fixed for decades after the battle or that Augustan poets rigidly adhered to a specific party line,⁴⁷ Augustan literature portrays Cleopatra as Octavian’s enemy, depicts her as an Egyptian rather than a Ptolemy, and denigrates Egypt using stereotypes that recur afterwards in Roman literature down to the time of Josephus.

The Augustan era poetry of Propertius and Vergil exemplify the negative portrayals of Cleopatra and Egypt in Augustan literature. In Propertius’ Elegy III.11, Cleopatra is the unnamed harlot queen who fled to the timorous Nile.⁴⁸ Using metonymies for Egypt, Propertius berates Alexandria as guilty and the land most attached to deceit,⁴⁹ Memphis as stained with blood,⁵⁰ Canopus as unchaste,⁵¹ and the Nile as cowardly.⁵² Propertius also disparages Egyptian religion and animal worship: the queen dared to match “barking Anubis” to Jove⁵³ and tried to drive off Rome with her sistrum.⁵⁴ Gurval comments that all these images were probably part of Octavian propaganda from before Actium.⁵⁵ Propertius identifies Cleopatra as a Macedonian, but

46. Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984 1928.

47. Gurval 1995 3–7 and *passim*.

48. Prop. III.11.39, 51. Propertius: c. 50 BCE – after 2 CE (Drury 1982 854).

49. Prop. III.11.33.

50. Prop. III.11.34.

51. Prop. III.11.39.

52. Prop. III.11.51. On metonymies in Prop. III.11, cf. Richardson Jr. 1977, 363, 366.

53. Prop. III.11.41.

54. Prop. III.11.43. The sistrum was used in Isis worship, cf. Apul. *Met.* 11.10 and Beard et al. 1998 134–136.

55. Gurval 1995 199.

does not mention Antony.⁵⁶

Vergil's description of Actium in the *ekphrasis* of the shield of Aeneas sets Augustus, leading the Senate and Roman people along with the Penates and gods of the Greco-Roman pantheon, against Antony, leading Egypt, the might of the east, and (shamefully) his Egyptian wife.⁵⁷ Although Vergil mentions Antony, he portrays the battle as a contest solely between Cleopatra, sistrum in hand, and the "monstrous gods" of Egypt including "barking Anubis" versus Neptune, Venus, and Minerva.⁵⁸ Even if Gurval is correct to assert that Vergil's *ekphrasis* does not portray Actium as a "national crusade against Egypt,"⁵⁹ Vergil probably expected his sneering at Cleopatra and Egyptian animal gods to resonate with his Roman audience.

Writing for an Augustan-era Roman audience, but in Greek and in a different genre, Strabo portrays Egypt very ambivalently, seemingly praising ancient Egypt, but criticizing the contemporary nation. From the beginning, according to Strabo, Egyptians appointed a king, ordered society into three classes, took good care of the land, and led "a civic and cultivated life."⁶⁰ Egyptian priests studied philosophy and astronomy, and the Egyptians invented geometry in order to remeasure the land after the Nile's annual flood.⁶¹ By contrast, Strabo finds no evidence of the vaunted priests of Heliopolis and their astronomy institute on his visit.⁶² Like other writers, Strabo criticizes Canopus and

56. Cleopatra as a descendant of Philip, Prop. III.11.40. Gurval notes the omission of Antony (Gurval 1995 200).

57. Verg. *Aen.* 6.678–679, 685–688.

58. Verg. *Aen.* 6.696–700.

59. Gurval 1995, 246.

60. Str. 17.1.3.

61. *Idem.*

62. Str. 17.1.29.

coins the term *Κανωβισμός* to describe the dissolute way of life there.⁶³ The good repute of Canopus as the home of the temple of Serapis is counter-balanced by the extreme licentiousness of the mobs in the city.⁶⁴ When describing contemporary Roman administration of Egypt, Strabo cites Polybius's opinion that the native Egyptians are unsuited to civic life.⁶⁵ Strabo persistently calls Cleopatra an Egyptian and notes that Augustus's victory ended Cleopatra and Antony's rule of drunken violence.⁶⁶

Negative stereotypes about Egyptians and derision of Egyptian animal worship recur frequently in Roman literature from the mid-first through early-second centuries CE. Lucan, Josephus's contemporary,⁶⁷ castigates Egypt as both a luxurious and savage⁶⁸ land, guilty of many atrocities⁶⁹ and more crimes than any other place.⁷⁰ He also berates Memphis as barbarous⁷¹ and impious,⁷² mentions the effeminate mob of Canopus,⁷³ and refers sarcastically to Egypt's half-divine dogs, Isis, and the sistrum.⁷⁴ Seneca, Lucan's uncle, writing in 64 CE⁷⁵ describes Canopus as a resort of vice, where luxury extends

63. Str. 17.1.16.

64. Str. 17.1.17.

65. Str. 17.1.12.

66. Cleopatra: Str. 6.4.2, 7.7.6, 13.1.30; drunken violence: Str. 17.1.11.

67. Lucan, 39–65 CE (Drury 1982 872).

68. Luxurious: Luc. 8.478; savage: 8.827.

69. Luc. 10.474.

70. Luc. 10.477–478.

71. Luc. 8.543.

72. Luc. 8.478.

73. Luc. 8.543.

74. Half-divine dogs, Luc. 8.832; Isis, 8.831; sistrum, 8.832.

75. Griffin 1976 396.

itself without limit.⁷⁶

Josephus's younger Roman contemporaries deploy the same stereotypes. Writing under Domitian,⁷⁷ Statius notes things Maecius Celer might learn on a visit to Egypt including why Memphis is jealous,⁷⁸ why Canopus is licentious,⁷⁹ and why common animals are worshipped as great gods.⁸⁰ Pliny describes Egypt as a vain and presumptuous nation,⁸¹ adding that Egypt is not indispensable, but is Rome's slave.⁸² Tacitus describes Egypt as very fecund, but also prone to civil strife on account of the superstition and licentiousness of its inhabitants, who are ignorant of laws and civil rule.⁸³ Juvenal's fifteenth satire famously ridicules Egyptian animal worship and begins by asking "Who knows not . . . what monsters demented Egypt worships?"⁸⁴ Juvenal mocks the profusion of animal gods worshipped by different cities, including crocodiles, snakes, and apes.⁸⁵ Egypt is a savage place⁸⁶ where it is prohibited to eat goats, but permitted to eat men.⁸⁷

76. Sen. *Ep.* 51.3.

77. Newlands dates *Silv.* 3 to 89–93 CE (Newlands 2011 3).

78. A pun with μέμψεσθαι, "to blame," Shackleton Bailey 2003 197 n. 18.

79. Stat. *Silv.* 3.2.110–111.

80. Stat. *Silv.* 3.2.113.

81. Plin. *Pan.* 31.3. Plin. *Ep.* 3.13 dates *Panegyricus* to 101–101 CE.

82. Plin. *Pan.* 31.3.

83. Tac. *Hist.* 1.11.

84. Juv. 15.1–2; Ramsey, LCL.

85. The full list includes fish, cats, and dogs (Juv. 15.2–8).

86. Juv. 15.44–45.

87. Juv. 15.11–13.

B. Josephus's Attitudes Towards Egypt and Egyptians

Josephus knew contemporary Roman stereotypes about Egypt, both positive and negative, and uses them skillfully to his advantage in *Jewish War*, *Jewish Antiquities*, and *Against Apion* to portray the Jews favorably.

(1) *Jewish War*

Jewish War presents Egypt as ancient and powerful, but denigrates Egyptians and aligns the Jews with Alexandria's "Macedonian" inhabitants as against the natives. After Simon's capture of Hebron, the residents claim that it is the oldest town in the country and is even older than Memphis (*War* 4.530), which presupposes that Egypt is extremely ancient.⁸⁸ The high priest Ananus tries to rally the masses in Jerusalem to oppose the Zealots, who have taken over the city, by reminding them that their forefathers never yielded to Egyptian or Median domination (*War* 4.175), which assumes that Egyptian power must have been impressive. Similarly, Egypt is the last and presumably most important example in Agrippa's long list of nations that have submitted to Rome (*War* 2.384).⁸⁹ Agrippa emphasizes Egypt's vastness, its enormous population, and the wealth of Alexandria, which pays Rome twelve times more tribute than Judea (*War* 2.385–386). Oddly, twenty Niese sections before praising Egyptian power, Agrippa implicitly denigrates Egyptians by rhetorically asking his audience if, in opposing Rome, they imagine that they are going to war with Egyptians or Arabs (*War* 2.362). Subsequently, Josephus again implicitly demeans native Egyptians by noting that Alexander the Great

88. Cf. Nu 13.22.

89. Agrippa's list includes Athens, Sparta, Macedon, the 500 cities of Asia, Thrace, Illyria, Dalmatia, Gaul, Spain, Germany, Britain, Parthia, Carthage, Cyrene, and the tribes of Africa (*War* 2.358–360, 365–383).

allowed the Jews to settle in Alexandria on equal terms⁹⁰ with the Greeks and permitted them to take the title “Macedonians” as a reward for the Jews’ aid against the Egyptians (*War* 2.487–488).⁹¹

Josephus also follows the Augustan line on Antony and Cleopatra by depicting Antony as enslaved or destroyed by his passion for Cleopatra (*War* 1.243, 359) and portraying Cleopatra as bloodthirsty (*War* 1.359–360) and scheming (*War* 1.365).

(2) *Jewish Antiquities*

Josephus frequently refers to Egypt in his account of Jewish history in *Antiquities* and deftly uses positive and negative stereotypes about Egypt from Greek and Latin literature to support his positive depiction of the Jews.

Josephus emphasizes in the proem to *Antiquities* that the Jews were very ancient⁹² and draws on the *topos* of Egyptian antiquity to reinforce this claim. In Genesis 13:18, Abraham settles in Hebron after his return from Egypt. The authoritative narrator in *Ant.* 1.170 comments that Hebron was seven years older than Tanis in Egypt, a fact noted in Num 13.22, but not in Gen 13. Josephus’s remark connects Abraham with the very remote past, as Feldman notes.⁹³

Josephus trades on respect for the Egyptians’ ancient records and claims that they

90. The Greek term is corrupt and the mss. disagree, but the general sense of the passage aligns the Jews with the Greeks as against native Egyptians. For a discussion of the variants, see Mason 2008 351 n. 2989.

91. Mason argues that Josephus misunderstands and misuses the term “Macedonian” (Mason 2008 352 n. 2986). Even if Mason is correct, Josephus clearly wants to associate the Jews with higher status Greeks as opposed to native Egyptians.

92. *Ant.* 1.6: the Jews fought many wars long ages before the revolt against Rome; *Ant.* 1.13: the Jews’ sacred scriptures are history of 5,000 years; *Ant.* 1.16 Moses was born 2,000 years ago, long before ancient poets refer to the birth of the gods.

93. Feldman 2000 65.

agree with the Jews' scriptures. In *Ant.* 8.155–59, Josephus breaks off his account of Solomon to explain why Egyptian kings from antiquity to the time of Solomon were all called *Pharaoh*. Josephus comments that the name Pharaoh means “king” (*Ant.* 8.155) and that Egyptian rulers take that name upon their accession (*Ant.* 8.156). Josephus posits that this is why Herodotus did not mention the names of the Egyptian kings who succeeded Minais, the builder of Memphis (*Ant.* 8.157). After commenting that Jewish scriptures do not call any Egyptian king Pharaoh after the time of Solomon, Josephus justifies his digression by asserting that it proves that “our books” agree with those of the Egyptians on many points (*Ant.* 8.159). Josephus's audience would not have known that Hebrew scriptures do refer to Egyptian rulers after Solomon as Pharaoh,⁹⁴ however they might have noticed that Josephus does not cite any Egyptian records in this digression, thus rendering his conclusion a non-sequitur. Josephus's assertion presupposes a reverence for Egyptian records.

Antiquities draws on the Egyptians' reputation for wisdom in extra-biblical additions to its account of Jewish history. After Ex 1:1–13 describes the Israelites' servitude, Ex 1:15–22 recounts Pharaoh's decree that all male Hebrew children be put to death. *Antiquities* 2.205 interrupts these two incidents with a extra-biblical prediction of the birth of a very wise Israelite who will exalt the Israelites and humble the rule of the Egyptians. Josephus attributes the prediction to an Egyptian sacred scribe and helpfully explains that such scribes have great skill in predicting the future.⁹⁵ Josephus here makes use of the Egyptian sacred scribes' reputation for wisdom to enhance his portrait of

94. Begg and Spilsbury note that some Egyptian kings are called Pharaoh after the account of Solomon, for example in 2 Kgs 18:19 (Begg and Spilsbury 2005 43 n. 526).

95. Feldman underscores the importance of Josephus's use of *ιερογραμματεύς* instead of *μάντις*, the LXX term for a “heathen soothsayer.” (Feldman 2000 188).

Moses, whose birth he then reports in *Ant.* 2.217.

Josephus also uses the Egyptians' reputation for knowledge to underscore the wisdom of Solomon. 1 Kings 5:10 praises Solomon by claiming that he was wiser than all the Kedemites and all the Egyptians. The LXX broadens this comparison by replacing the reference to the Kedemites with a reference to "all ancient men." *Antiquities* 8.42 modifies the LXX's version by adding the comment that the Egyptians "are said to excel all men in understanding," which suggests that their reputation is widely known, although Josephus's use of λέγονται somewhat diminishes this claim.

Josephus also enhances his portrait of Solomon by depicting the queen of Sheba as a wise Egyptian. 1 Kgs 10:1–13 tells the story of the queen of Sheba who hears of Solomon and comes to test him with difficult questions. In the digression on the term *Pharaothi*, Josephus identifies the queen of Egypt and Ethiopia who visits Solomon with Nikaule, the Egyptian queen mentioned by Herodotus (*Ant.* 8.159). Subsequently in *Ant.* 8.165–175, which parallels the account of 1 Kgs 10:1–13, Josephus again refers to the queen of Ethiopia and Egypt and adds that she was well-trained in wisdom and excellent (*Ant.* 8.165). By identifying the biblical queen of Sheba with the very wise queen of Egypt and Ethiopia mentioned by Herodotus, Josephus connects this incident with Egyptian records, via his claim in *Ant.* 8.159 that they agree with Jewish writings, and with the Egyptians' reputation for wisdom. This linkage underscores the accuracy of Josephus's account of Solomon and enhances the queen's praise for Solomon's wisdom and understanding (*Ant.* 8.168, 171).

Josephus carefully combines positive stereotypes about Egyptian wisdom with

negative stereotypes about Egyptian licentiousness in his highly embroidered account of Abraham and Sarah's visit to Egypt from Gn 12:10–20. In the biblical version, a famine forces Abraham and Sarah to move to Egypt (Gen 12:10). Abraham fears that the Egyptians will kill him if they realize that Sarah is his wife and convinces Sarah to pretend to be his sister (Gen 12:11–13). When Abraham and Sarah arrive in Egypt, Pharaoh's courtiers praise Sarah to Pharaoh, and Pharaoh has her taken to the palace (Gen 12:14–15). God strikes Pharaoh's house with plagues because of Sarah, and Pharaoh, realizing that Sarah is Abraham's wife, sends Abraham away with Sarah and many possessions (Gen 12:17–20).

In the *Antiquities*' very different account, Abraham goes to Egypt during the famine for two reasons not mentioned in Genesis: Egypt's prosperity and a desire to discuss theology with the Egyptian priests—either to adopt their views of the divine or to convert them to his views (*Ant.* 1.161). Josephus reports that Abraham fears the Egyptian mania for women and pretends to be Sarah's brother (*Ant.* 1.162). Pharaoh, not satisfied with reports of Sarah's beauty, eagerly wants see her and intends to have sex with her (*Ant.* 1.163). God restrains Pharaoh's unjust passion by diseases and *stasis* (*Ant.* 1.164). When Pharaoh learns that his desire to outrage the stranger's wife caused these ills, Pharaoh apologizes to Abraham and gives him gifts (*Ant.* 1.164–65). Abraham then meets with the most learned Egyptians and expands his reputation for virtue and judgement (*Ant.* 1.165). Because the Egyptians have different customs and are hostile to each other, Abraham meets the most learned Egyptians individually and explains that their views are empty and untrue (*Ant.* 1.166). Abraham gains a reputation for great intelligence and persuasive teaching, and introduces the Egyptians to arithmetic and astronomy (*Ant.* 1.167). Josephus concludes by observing that the Egyptians had been

ignorant of these sciences, but that this knowledge subsequently travelled from the Egyptians to the Greeks (*Ant.* 1.168).

Josephus's account draws on positive and negative stereotypes of Egyptians with no evident concern for consistency to enhance his portrayal of Abraham. Egypt is prosperous. Egyptian priests have useful things to say—which is one reason Abraham wants to visit them—and impressing them improves Abraham reputation. Yet, Egyptians are also licentious and willing to outrage the wife of a visitor. Egyptian priests argue about their differing customs, have empty and untrue opinions, and were ignorant of astronomy and mathematics. An attentive reader might note that Josephus's comment that the Egyptians hold untrue opinions devalues their admiration for Abraham.

The *Antiquities*' versions of Gn 15 and Ex 1 modify the biblical prediction and description of the nation's origin in Egypt by denigrating the Egyptians using negative *topoi* drawn from Greek and Latin authors. In Gen 15:13, God tells Abraham that his offspring will be strangers in a foreign land for four hundred years before they return to the land God has promised them. *Antiquities* 1.185 omits the reference to a foreign land, specifying Egypt in its place, and adds that Abraham's descendants will have evil neighbors there.⁹⁶

In place of Ex 1:7's report that the Israelites multiplied and grew strong, *Ant.* 2.201–202 ridicules the Egyptians with typical canards from Greco-Roman literature:

96. πονηροὶ...γείτονες. The phrase appears nowhere else in Josephus. It is used once in LXX Jer 12:14, where God says that he will uproot wicked neighbors (οἱ γείτονες οἱ πονηροί) who touch his people's inheritance. Aesop uses πονηροὶ γείτονες (*Aesop Fabulae Aphthonii Rhetoris* 38 line 7) and a similar phrase appears in Hesiod, who notes that evil neighbors are a plague (κακὸς γείτων; Hes. *Op.* 346; cf. 348).

they are effeminate and lazy,⁹⁷ slaves to other pleasures and particularly to a love of money.⁹⁸ Seeing the Hebrews flourishing through their virtue and disposition towards labor, the Egyptians treated the Hebrews terribly because they envied their prosperity. The contrast between the Egyptians' laziness and the Hebrews' industriousness implies that the Egyptians lack the virtue which the Hebrews possess. Moreover, the Egyptians' envy suggests that they occupy a lower status than the Hebrews.⁹⁹

The theme of Egyptian envy reappears at the end of the entirely extra-biblical account of Moses's successful campaign in Ethiopia (*Ant.* 2.238–255). Jealous of Moses's generalship and fearing his own humiliation, the Egyptian king contemplates killing Moses (*Ant.* 2.255). Egyptians as a group are also ungrateful: after Moses has saved them from the Ethiopians, they conceive a hatred for him and plot against his life (*Ant.* 2.254).

Antiquities presents a wholly negative portrait of Cleopatra very similar to Roman depictions of her. Cleopatra by nature delighted in greed and left no lawless deed undone (*Ant.* 15.89). She caused the poisoning of her brother and the death of her sister Arsinoe, killed when she was a suppliant at the temple of Artemis (*Ant.* 15. 86). Cleopatra impiously violated temples and tombs on the slightest chance of procuring money—no holy place was safe from the greed of that wicked women (*Ant.* 15.90). The

97. τρυφερός...ράθυμος, *Ant.* 2.201; cf. ἀσωτία...ράθυμία, Polyb. 39.7.

98. φιλοκέρδεια, *Ant.* 2.201; cf. φιλοχρήματος, Pl. *Resp.* 436a.

99. Envy = φθόνος, *Ant.* 2.201. In *Ap.* 1.224, Josephus attributes the Egyptians' hatred and envy (φθόνος) to (a) "our ancestors'" domination of the Egyptians and their prosperity when they returned to their own land, and (b) the contrast between their "religions" (εὐσέβεια). On the implication that the Egyptians' envy in *Ap.* 1.224 gives them a lower status, see Berthelot 2000 216–17 and Barclay 2004 119.

whole world was insufficient for her and she was a slave to her passions (*Ant.* 15.91). As in Roman sources, Josephus portrays her as licentious: Cleopatra was frequently in Herod's company and tried to have sex with him—partly because she was by nature used to enjoying such pleasures openly (*Ant.* 15.97). Although *Ant.* 15–17 may draw on the work of Nicolas of Damascus, Josephus evidently chose to portray Cleopatra using well-known negative stereotypes about her, which suggests he shared or was pandering to the prejudices of his Roman audience.¹⁰⁰

Antiquities 18.65–80 describes “shameful events” at the temple of Isis in Rome which blacken Egyptian religion.¹⁰¹ A high ranking Roman equestrian, Decius Mundus, had conceived a passion for a virtuous and modest Roman woman of noble descent, Paulina, but she rejected his gifts and refused a substantial bribe to have sex with him (18.66–67). Mundus's evil freedwoman Ida, knowing that Paulina was a devotee of Isis, bribed the priests at the temple of Isis to procure the woman for Mundus (18.69–71). The oldest priest convinced Paulina that the god Anubis was in love with her and wanted to have sex with her in the temple; the priests helped Mundus pose as Anubis and he had sex with Paulina (18.72–74). When Paulina discovered that she had been duped and told her husband, he appealed to Tiberius who had Ida and the priests crucified, the temple of Isis razed, and the statue of Isis throne into the Tiber (18.77–79). Josephus's conclusion ignores Mundus and Ida, and comments “such were the insolent acts of the priests of Isis” (18.80). This account disparages the priests as impious promoters of lasciviousness

100. On Nicolas as a source for *Ant.* 15–17, see Cohen 1979 52–58.

101. On the relationship between this account and the reports in Tacitus and Suetonius of Jewish and Egyptian expulsions from Rome, see Chapter 5 B2 page 209 ff.

who are devoted to money and suggests that Egyptian religion, even in Rome far from Egypt, conflicts with Roman virtues.

(3) *Against Apion*

As Chapter 5 will show, one of the main goals of *Against Apion* is proving that the Jews are not Egyptian by origin, as Josephus notes in the work's conclusion (*Ap.* 2.289).¹⁰² Perhaps surprisingly, Josephus makes his case both by positive references to Egyptian wisdom and the antiquity of their records, and by deriding Egyptian animal worship and the character of Egyptians.¹⁰³

Josephus frequently praises the antiquity and accuracy of Egyptian records and asserts that they verify his claims. At the end of the proem, Josephus stresses that he will defend his statements with witnesses on ancient history judged by the Greeks to be the most trustworthy (*Ap.* 1.4), namely the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, and the Phoenicians (*Ap.* 1.8). Even the Greeks admit that the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Phoenicians possess a very ancient and stable record of the past (*Ap.* 1.8), and everyone agrees Egyptian records were entrusted to their priests in the most remote times (*Ap.* 1.28). Underscoring their importance, Josephus announces that he will begin his defense of the Jews' antiquity in *Ap.* 1.69-218 by starting with Egyptian documents, plural, although he cites only one Egyptian source, Manetho (*Ap.* 1.73). At the end of this section of *Apion* and again at the beginning of book II, Josephus claims that he has proven the Jews' antiquity by using Egyptian, Chaldean, and Phoenician records (*Ap.* 1.215, 2.1).¹⁰⁴

102. See Chapter 5 C2 page 212 ff.

103. On Josephus's use of anti-Egyptian stereotypes in *Apion*, see Berthelot 2000.

104. Josephus refers to Egyptian, Chaldean, and Phoenician records five times, usually listing the Egyptians first (*Ap.* 1.8, 28, 70, 215; but cf. *Ap.* 2.1). Barclay comments that Josephus places the Egyptians first because of their reputation for wisdom (Barclay 2007

Against Apion also refers to the Egyptians' wisdom. Josephus begins his criticism of Greek historiography by observing that the first Greeks to study the heavens and gods owed what little they wrote to the Egyptians and Chaldeans (*Ap.* 1.13).¹⁰⁵ He also notes that Egyptian priests used the Egyptians' ancient records for philosophical enquiry (*Ap.* 1.28).

Despite invoking the Egyptians' authoritative records and mentioning their wisdom, *Apion's* depiction of Egyptians is overwhelmingly negative and repeatedly mocks Egyptian animal worship. Josephus begins his reply to anti-Jewish slanders in the central part of *Apion* (1.219-2.144) by observing that Egyptians had depraved ideas about the gods from the beginning because their national custom is to regard animals as deities (*Ap.* 1.225). Josephus derides Manetho's story about Amenophis's desire to see the gods by comparing the divinities established by Egyptian law—the bull, the goat, crocodiles, and dog-headed creatures—with the celestial gods (*Ap.* 1.254–255). Josephus skillfully lists these so-called deities by word-length, which makes them seem increasingly laughable as the list progresses.¹⁰⁶ To Apion's claim that Jews worship the statue of an ass in the temple, Josephus replies that an ass is no worse than the hawks, goats, and other animals that Egyptians worship (*Ap.* 2.81). Apion could have studied reliable evidence about worship in the temple from Pompey, Titus, and others if he did not possess “the mind of an ass and the impudence of a dog,” which animals his

51 n. 288).

105. This may echo the claim in *Ant.* 1.168 that Abraham taught the Egyptians astronomy and arithmetic, and that the Egyptians, in turn, taught the Greeks. See page 174 ff. above.

106. τὸν βοῦν καὶ τράγον καὶ κροκοδείλους καὶ κυνοκεφάλους (*Ap.* 1.254). As Barclay notes (Barclay 2007 143 n. 891).

countrymen worship (*Ap.* 2.85; Barclay, BJC). Jews do not honor asses the way Egyptians honor crocodiles or asps (*Ap.* 2.86). Instead, Jews and other sensible people beat asses when they cause trouble (*Ap.* 2.87).

Egyptian animal worship is not only laughable, but dangerous. Although all Egyptians worship animals, they disagree in the honors they pay to them (*Ap.* 1.255) and wage “huge and implacable battles” against each other about religion (*Ap.* 2.65; Barclay BJC).¹⁰⁷ Egyptians consider anyone bitten by an asp or carried off by a crocodile to be fortunate and “worthy of god” (*Ap.* 2.86).¹⁰⁸ Arguing *ad absurdum*, Josephus sneers that the world would be left without men and filled with wild animals if everyone followed Egyptian customs (*Ap.* 2.139).

Josephus also attacks innate defects in the Egyptians’ character. They are empty-headed, foolish and “petty,” which explains their worship of animals (*Ap.* 1.225–226; Barclay, BJC). With a Roman audience explicitly in view (*Ap.* 2.125–126, 134), Josephus attacks Egyptians as a servile people. To Apion’s claim that the Jews’ servitude to various nations proves that the Jews’ laws are unjust and their worship improper, Josephus replies that the Egyptians have never had a single day of freedom, not even from their native rulers (*Ap.* 1.125, 128). Although the Jewish kings David and Solomon conquered many nations, and the Jews were free for 120 years until the coming of Pompey, the Egyptians were the slaves of the Persians and Macedonians (*Ap.* 2.132–133). Moving beyond the metaphorical sense of “slavery” as political subjugation,

107. The Latin text of *Ap.* 2.65 reads *de religione*. Some contemporary scholars argue that “religion” is a modern category (cf. Hughes 2013 3–4; Batnitzky 2011 1, 25–27). Cf. Juv. 15.

108. *Deo dignus*, an odd phrase. See Barclay 2007 216 n. 313.

Josephus comments that the Egyptians' status under the Persians and Macedonians differed in no way from war captives sold as slaves (ἀνδράποδον; *Ap.* 2.133). The expanding multitude of Egyptians in Alexandria, who lacked the character of the Macedonians and the Greeks' good sense, was the cause of ever-increasing sedition there (*Ap.* 2.69–70). Josephus's comment that only the Jews remained pure or unmixed implies that mixing between Egyptians and Macedonians led to disorder in Alexandria and that Egyptian seditiousness is a biological trait propagated by breeding (*Ap.* 2.69). *Apion* 2.66 even questions the Egyptians' humanity: "we" do not call them human beings because they worship wild animals hostile to mankind.¹⁰⁹ No king or Roman emperor ever granted Egyptians citizen rights in Alexandria (*Ap.* 2.72), and the Egyptians are the only people the Romans refuse to make Roman citizens (*Ap.* 2.41); both facts perhaps prove the Egyptians' innate baseness.

Josephus assumes throughout *Against Apion* that merely identifying an opponent as Egyptian is enough to discredit him in the eyes of his Roman audience. The reply to anti-Jewish slanders in *Ap.* 1.219–244 begins by claiming that the Egyptians began the slanders (*Ap.* 1.223). Josephus's refutation of Apion centers on the (possibly false) charge that Apion was an Egyptian. Apion was born in an oasis and was thus as Egyptian as possible and, by denying his true origin and falsely claiming to be an Alexandrian, he admitted the depravity of his people (*Ap.* 2.29).¹¹⁰ He would never have abandoned his

109. Literally: "contrary to our nature" (Barclay, BJC). On the charge of Jewish misanthropy, cf. Tac. *Hist.* 5.1.

110. In *Ant.* 18.257, by contrast, Josephus describes Apion as one of the *Greeks* in the delegation from Alexandria to Gaius. Benaissa concludes from *P. Oxy.* 5202 that Apion was a citizen of one of the Greek cities in Egypt, most likely Alexandria (Benaissa 2014 130–132). It was difficult, but possible for "an Egyptian" to acquire Alexandrian citizenship (*idem* 131). Cf. Barclay 2007 183 n. 96.

people if he had not thought them “utterly worthless” (*Ap.* 2.30, Barclay BJC). Thus, Apion calls anyone one he hates and wishes to abuse “an Egyptian” (*Ap.* 2.30). Josephus twice returns to this line of attack, noting that Apion was born in deepest Egypt (*Ap.* 2.41) and that his criticism of the Jews’ custom of animal sacrifice proves that he is an Egyptian (*Ap.* 2.128).

Chapter 5 - Josephus on the Jews' Egyptian Origins

Introduction

The Genesis-Exodus account depicts the Israelites as the descendants of a group of migrants from Mesopotamia who were forced by famine to move from Canaan to Egypt, as Chapter 2 notes.¹ After several generations in Egypt and their subjection to compulsory labor, Moses led the people out of Egypt directed and aided by God. Greek and Latin ethnographies, including that of Josephus's younger contemporary Tacitus, describe the Jews as Egyptian by origin.² An ancient audience would have expected the Jews' (putative) Egyptian origins to explain their character and customs.³ First-century CE Roman sources, probably influenced by Augustan propaganda, are full of highly negative, anti-Egyptian stereotypes, which Josephus knew well.⁴ These negative views of Egypt combined with the idea that the Jews were originally Egyptians might have posed a significant problem for Josephus, who strove to present a favorable portrait of the Jews to his Roman audience. Unlike Artapanus who depicts the Jews as central to Egyptian culture or Philo who describes Egypt as the Jews' second fatherland, Josephus explicitly denies in *Antiquities* and *Apion* that the Jews were Egyptian by origin, although the proem to *Jewish War*, which specifically declines to recount the Jews' archaic history,

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1. Chapter 2 A1 page 42 ff.
 2. Chapter 3 B page 124 ff.
 3. Chapter 3A page 121 ff.
 4. Chapter 4 A2 page 164 ff.

implies that they were originally Egyptian.

A. *Jewish War*

Although *Jewish War* is a first-hand account of the Jews' revolt against Rome, it includes a few comments about the Jews' ancient origins which are important precisely because they are tangential to the work's main subject. An attentive reader of *War* might not have formed a consistent picture of the Jews' origins, but would have learned that Jewish origins were linked with Egypt, and would probably have concluded that the Jews were originally Egyptian.

Josephus inadvertently reveals a great deal about the Jews' origins in the proem of *Jewish War* by telling his audience what the work will *not* cover. *War* 1.17 comments that it would be out of place and superfluous to relate the story of the Jews' ancient history, since many Jews have already accurately recorded it and it has been translated into Greek. Josephus's précis of what such an ἀρχαιολογία would contain merits close reading. Recounting the Jews' ancient history would involve explaining:

τίνες τε ὄντες καὶ ὅπως ἀπανεστήσαν Αἰγυπτίων χώραν τε ὅσῃν ἐπῆλθον
ἀλώμενοι καὶ πόσα ἐξῆς κατέλαβον καὶ ὅπως μετανέστησαν (*War* 1.17).⁵

This passage is notable for its indefiniteness. It mentions who the Jews are (τίνες τε ὄντες), the great land they encountered or traversed on their wanderings (ἀλώμενοι), the great quantity of land which they seized over time, and how they migrated (μετανέστησαν). The only definite information that Josephus provides is that the Jews

5. “[To narrate the ancient history of the Jews would involve describing] the origin of the nation and the circumstances of their migration from Egypt, the countries which they Jewish traversed in their wanderings, the extent of the territory which they subsequently occupied, and the incidents which led to their deportation[.]” (Thackeray, LCL).

departed from Egypt (ἀπανεστήσαν Αἰγυπτίων). The double-compound verb Josephus uses to describe the Jews' departure, ἀπανίστημι, although uncommon, appears in descriptions of migration and colonization. Dionysius of Halicarnassus uses ἀπανίστημι to describe the migration of the first Greek settlers to Italy and their colony,⁶ the migration of Oenotrus from Greece to establish the first colony in Italy,⁷ and the village the Arcadians established for the crews of the ships in which they had migrated.⁸ Mention of the Jews' wandering (ἀλάομαι) clarifies that the Jews migrated from Egypt and went on a journey to a new land. Given that ancient ethnographies envisaged two possible origins for a people, autochthony and migration, a reader of *War* 1.17 would conclude that the Jews were originally migrants from Egypt.⁹ An ancient reader would expect the ἀρχαιολογία of a migratory people to include the details of their country of origin and an account of their wanderings, because their original homeland and the circumstances of their migration would explain the people's character and customs.¹⁰ *War* 1.17 suggests that the Jews' migration from Egypt would explain their practices and laws, and this is consistent with ancient ethnographies that claim that the Jews were originally Egyptian.¹¹

The last element in Josephus's description of the Jews' ἀρχαιολογία in *War* 1.17, ὅπως μετανέστησαν, is ambiguous and possibly confusing. When used intransitively, the verb μετανίστημι, another uncommon double-compound, can mean "to depart (from

6. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.11.1.

7. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.11.2–3.

8. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.31.3.

9. See Chapter 3 A page 119 ff.

10. See Chapter 3 A page 121 ff.

11. See Chapter 3 B page 124 ff.

one's country),” but can also mean “migrate” as Dionysius of Halicarnassus uses it in *Ant. Rom.* 1.17.3. Most modern translations render the phrase “how the Jews were deported” perhaps assuming that Josephus is referring to the Jews’ deportation to Babylonia.¹² A Roman audience would probably not have known about the Jews’ exile in Babylonia and may have understood μεταίσθημι to refer to yet another migration to and from some unspecified lands.¹³

Oddly, Josephus does not clarify whether the Jews migrated. Josephus takes for granted that his readers would understand that the disasters and misfortunes of his πατρίς (“fatherland,” “ancestral land,” *War* 1.9, 11) refer at least to Judea, home of Jerusalem, if not to a wider area.¹⁴ This would be consistent with Dionysius of Halicarnassus’s

12. Thackeray, LCL; Pelletier, Budé; Ullman, Carmel; Shimhoni, Mossad Bialik; Harmond & Reinach, SEJ all have “deported.” Michel & Bauernfeind are more literal and have “to move away.” Whiston has the passive “were removed.” Thackeray sees another reference to the Babylonian exile in *War* 5.99 (Thackeray 1928 31 n. c), but this is extremely far-fetched, as Shatzman also comments (Shatzman 2009 450 n. 45). See page 191 n. 19.

13. No Greek or Latin source appears to mention the Babylonian exile. Josephus seems to claim that Berossus refers to it (*Ap.* 1.132), but his citation of Berossus (*Ap.* 1.137–138) probably does not refer to the capture of Jerusalem (see Stern I:61) and Josephus may have altered Berossus’s text (see Barclay 2007 83 n. 355; see also Tatian *Or. Graec.* 36). Josephus also reports that Hecataeus of Abdera comments on the deportation of the Jews to Babylonia by the Persians (*Ap.* 1.194), which might be a garbled reference to the Babylonian exile (Barclay 2007 112 n. 655). Bar-Kochva argues that this passage is the work of a Jew (see Bar-Kochva 1996). A very attentive reader who thought this passage was by Hecataeus of Abdera might, therefore, have known something about a deportation to Babylonia. Pompeius Trogus appears to know about Babylonian rule in Palestine, but does not mention a deportation (Pomp. Trog. *ap. Just. Epit.* 36.8; cf. Stern I:342). Tacitus reports that the Jews may have come from Assyria/Babylon (Tac. *Hist.* 5.2.3 with Stern II:34). Polyhistor mentions the capture of Jerusalem, but not deportations (*ap. Eus. P.E.* 9.39).

14. Josephus promises in *War* 1.22 to describe the dimensions and nature of both Galilee and the boundaries of Judea, which might imply that the Galilee and Judea constitute the Jews’ πατρίς. However, Josephus might have promised to describe Galilee because it was the setting for his command during the first part of the war.

explanation of colonization: migrants depart a city as though having no share of their (original) πατρίς and consider the new land which they settle to be their πατρίς.¹⁵

Although Josephus does not report that the Jews migrated to Judea, a contemporary Roman reader who knew that the recent war was fought in Judea and culminated in the capture of Jerusalem would probably assume that the Jews who migrated from Egypt made Judea their (new) πατρίς.

A reference to Abraham further complicates *War*'s depiction of Jewish origins. *War* 4.531 reports that the inhabitants of Hebron claim that the Jews' progenitor Abraham lived in Hebron after his migration (ἀπανάστασις) from Mesopotamia and that his descendants went down to Egypt from there. The use of ἀπανάστασις for "migration" echoes the use of ἀπανίστημι in *War* 1.17. Because ethnographies often tell the story of colonies founded by a single important figure, the story of Abraham's migration from Mesopotamia to Hebron would fit an ethnographic trope.¹⁶ Confusingly, however, *War* 4.530 suggests two migrations, one by Abraham, the Jews' progenitor, from Mesopotamia and another by his offspring to Egypt. Neither of these stories is consistent with Josephus's description of the Jews in *War* 1.17 as a group of migrants *from* Egypt.

Josephus's speech before the walls of Jerusalem in *War* 5.362–419 confuses the picture further. When his direct appeal to the Jews under siege in Jerusalem attracts only

15. *Ant. Rom.* 1.16.1–3. See also Dionysius's account of Tullus's suggestion to the Albans that Rome and Alba merge and that they choose one of the two cities to be their πατρίς (*Ant. Rom.* 3.29.4, 30.3). Strikingly, Dionysius seems to suggest that a πατρίς is a social construction. On ethnicity as a social construction, see Chapter 1 page 25 ff. and Smith 1986 28–29.

16. On founders of nations, see page 139 n. 112.

curses and stones in reply, Josephus turns to their national history (*War* 5.375) and “the works of God” (*War* 5.378). Josephus’s first mentions Pharaoh Nechao’s kidnapping of Sarah, “the mother of our race,” and her subsequent return (*War* 5.379–381). Incongruously, given the Egyptian’s execrable behavior towards Sarah, Josephus then describes the Jews’ apparently voluntary sojourn in Egypt. “Need I speak,” Josephus asks rhetorically, “of the migration of our fathers to Egypt (*War* 5.382)?”¹⁷ Although subject to tyranny and rule by foreign kings, the Jews turned themselves to God (*War* 5.382) and, in consequence, were sent forth under guard (*War* 5.383). An attentive reader might link this passage to the story of Abraham’s descendants and their “going down” to Egypt from *War* 4.530, but a connection is not obvious, and Josephus makes no attempt to link the fathers of *War* 5.382 with the children of *War* 4.530. It is also unclear how “the fathers” of *War* 5.382 are related to the mother of the race, Sarah, whose kidnapping a few lines before makes the fathers’ voluntary journey to Egypt an odd one. The fathers’ choice to migrate *to* Egypt is also inconsistent with *War* 1.17’s claim that the Jews migrated *from* Egypt, as is the fathers’ subsequently being “sent forth” from Egypt.

Two references to the festival of unleavened bread in *Jewish War* also describe a departure from Egypt.¹⁸ When reporting that the Sicarii’s raid against Engaddi took place during the festival of unleavened bread, Josephus explains that the Jews keep this festival as a celebration of salvation because they were released from slavery to the Egyptians and returned to their ancestral land (ἡ πατρία γῆ; *War* 4.402). A reader would

17. Thackeray, LCL

18. *War* mentions *πάσχα* in *War* 2.10 and 6.423, and Unleavened Bread in *War* 2.10, 224, 244, 280; 4.402; 5.99; 6.290, 421.

probably have found this comment, the first outside of the proem to link the Jews' ancestors with Egypt, inconsistent with the claim in *War* 1.17 that the Jews migrated from Egypt, presumably to a new πατρίς, Judea. At best, a reader who thought *War* 4.402's use of ἡ πάτρια γῆ referred to Judea as the Jews' contemporary πατρίς, but not its land of origin, might have been confused by the claim that the Jews *returned* there. A reader who ignored *War* 1.17, but took *War* 4.402 together with the subsequent reference in *War* 4.531 to Abraham's migration from Mesopotamia and his descendants migration to Egypt might have concluded that the Jews' πατρίς was either Hebron or Mesopotamia.

War 5.99 reports that, when the day of unleavened bread came around on the fourteenth of Xanthicos, Eleazar opened the gates of the temple to those who wished to pray inside. In an aside, Josephus explains that Jews regard the day as the time they first got rid of or departed from the Egyptians.¹⁹ This is consistent with *War* 1.17's report that the Jews migrated from Egypt.

Although Josephus clearly states that *Jewish War* will not address the Jews' ἀρχαιολογία, his description of the ancient history he will *not* cover and the incidental references to Jewish origins create a confused picture. A Roman audience unfamiliar with Jewish history, beyond knowledge of the recent revolt, would probably have concluded that Jewish origins were linked to Egypt and may have thought that the

19. Thackeray understands τὸν πρῶτον ἀπαλλαγῆναι καιρὸν Αἰγυπτίων to refer to the Jews's "liberation." Shatzman notes that the reference to a "first time" confusingly suggests that there might have been a second liberation. He concludes, however, that the phrase might refer to the beginning of the Jews' liberation on 14 Nisan (Shatzman 2009 450 n. 99). The translations of Pelletier, Reinach-Weil-Leroux, and Michel & Bauernfeind interpret the phrase this way. Ullmann suggests "the first day of their liberation from Egyptian slavery" (יום הראשון לשהרורם מעבדות מצרים; Ullmann, Carmel). The Aorist passive of ἀπαλλάσσω + Genitive requires nothing more definite than "depart" (LSJ s.v. ἀπαλλάσσω B.II) or "get away from" (Bailly 2000 200 s.v. ἀπαλλάσσω B.2).

Jews were originally Egyptian, as Josephus implies in *War* 1.17.

B. *Jewish Antiquities*

In *Antiquities*, Josephus returns to the task he had avoided in *Jewish War*: narrating the Jews' ἀρχαιολογία,²⁰ a five thousand year history²¹ interpreted from the Hebrew writings.²² This required relating the story of the Jews' origins to his Roman audience. Josephus appears to be sensitive to claims that the Jews were originally Egyptian and directly rejects this view at several places in *Antiquities*. However, other passages suggest that the Jews were Egyptian by origin, including a citation from Strabo which states this explicitly.

(1) Suggestions of Egyptian Origin

Josephus first refers to Egypt in *Antiquities* when he dates the story of the flood. *Antiquities* 1.80–81 reports that the flood happened in the six hundredth year of Noah's rule in the second month, which was called Dius by the Macedonians, but Marsuan by the Hebrews according to the calendar that they followed in Egypt (*Ant.* 1.80). Josephus then explains that Moses made Xanthicus/Nisan the first month for the festivals and for honors to the divine because Nisan was the month in which Moses had brought the Hebrews out of Egypt (*Ant.* 1.81). Based on this passage, which appears before any discussion of the Jews' earliest ancestors, a Roman audience would probably have concluded that the Jews were originally Egyptian and migrated from Egypt under the leadership of Moses—as Tacitus, Pompeius Trogus, and Strabo report.²³

20. *Ant.* 1.6.

21. *Ant.* 1.13.

22. *Ant.* 1.6.

23. In Pompeius Trogus's account, Moses, who is from Damascus, leads a band of

At three points in *Antiquities*, Josephus describes the Hebrews who left Egypt as “our ancestors,” using the term πρόγονος, which can mean an ancestor or a founder of a race, or “our fathers.” Both terms suggest that the Jews’ ancestors were Egyptian. *Antiquities* book 2, which takes up the story of Genesis after the death of Abraham, begins by noting that Jacob and his offspring were responsible for the departure of “our ancestors” (πρόγονος) from Egypt (*Ant.* 2.8). Josephus’s claim that Jacob and his children are responsible for the *departure* from Egypt is odd because *Ant.* 1.81 has already reported that Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt and because the biblical story of Jacob and his children explains how the Hebrews came to live *in* Egypt. By contrasting Jacob and his family with “our ancestors,” however, *Ant.* 2.8 suggests they are not identical and reinforces the idea that the ancestors of the Jews came from Egypt.

Antiquities 9.280 concludes the account of the destruction of the kingdom of Israel by reporting that the ten tribes migrated from Judea 947 years after their πρόγονοι went out of Egypt and occupied “this land.” Similarly, when enumerating the succession of high priests in *Antiquities* 20, Josephus specifies the number of years that the first thirteen high priests held office by referring to the date when “our fathers” (πατέρες) left Egypt under Moses’s leadership (*Ant.* 20.230). A Roman reader might infer from these references to πρόγονοι and πατέρες that the Jews’ progenitors originally came from Egypt and migrated to Judea.

Josephus employs a range of terms in *Antiquities* to describe the Hebrews’

diseased Egyptians out of Egypt. Hecataeus of [Abdera] reports that Moses led a band of strangers from Egypt (Diod. Sic. 40.3). See the detailed discussion in Chapter 3, page 128 ff. and Table 1 page 155.

departure from Egypt and sometimes describes it as a migration (μετανάστασις).²⁴ The account of Joseph's death in Egypt, which corresponds to the end of Genesis, observes that his bones were taken to Canaan later, when the Hebrews migrated (μετανίστημι) from Egypt (*Ant.* 2.200). Later in *Antiquities* 2, Josephus describes the Hebrews' departure from Egypt and notes that it was difficult to count the total number of emigrants (μετανίστημι, *Ant.* 2.317). Josephus often dates major events in Jewish history, and *Ant.* 10.147–148 dates the burning of the temple by referring to the migration of the people from Egypt (μετανάστασις, *Ant.* 10.147). Although Josephus might use μετανάστασις to achieve variety, given the opposition between autochthony and migration for a nation's origins, a reader of *Antiquities* might have concluded from references to μετανάστασις that the Jews were originally Egyptian.

Josephus's attempt to refute Herodotus's account of the invasion of Shishak, king of Egypt,²⁵ might suggest that the Jewish custom of circumcision—and thus the Jews themselves—was linked with Egypt.²⁶ *Antiquities* 8.253 claims that Herodotus wrongly attributes the attack against Rehoboam to Sesostris, and *Ant.* 8.262 then notes that Herodotus also reports that the Phoenicians and the Syrians of Palestine learned the practice of circumcision from the Egyptians (cf. *Hdt.* 2.104).²⁷ Josephus identifies

24. Josephus uses forms of λείπω, *to leave behind* (ἐκλείπω *Ant.* 3.16, 201; καταλείπω *Ant.* 2.318); forms of ἄγω, *to lead* (προάγω, *Ant.* 1.81; ἐξάγω, *Ant.* 2.269, *Ant.* 6.38); ἔρχομαι/εἶμι, *to go* (ἐξέρχομαι, *Ant.* 6.132; ἔξειμι, *Ant.* 2.315, 3.248); φεύγω, *to flee* (*Ant.* 3.265); and ἀπαλλάσσω, *to remove* (*Ant.* 4.212). *Antiquities* also uses a range of nouns to describe the Hebrews departure from Egypt, including ἔξοδος, *departure* (*Ant.* 3.61, 305; 5.72, 261; 8.61); κίνησις, *movement* (*Ant.* 3.62); ἀναχώρησις, *retreat/leaving* (*Ant.* 3.294); and ἄπαρσις, *departure* (*Ant.* 17.213).

25. Cf. 1 Kg 14:25; 2 Chr 12:1.

26. Cf. Philo *QG* 3.47; see Chapter 2 page 77.

27. The comment appears in Herodotus's argument that the Colchians are Egyptians.

Herodotus's error: only the Jews in Palestine-Syria practice circumcision (*Ant.* 8.262). Josephus first mentions circumcision in his account of the birth of Isaac and promises to explain the reasons for the custom elsewhere (*Ant.* 1.192–193; cf Gn 17); however, the précis of Jewish law in *Ant.* 3–4 does not mention circumcision.²⁸ *Antiquities* 8.262 suggests that the Jews learned the practice of circumcision from the Egyptians, which is consistent with claims in Diodorus Siculus and Strabo, who claim that the custom of circumcision proves that the Jews were originally Egyptian.²⁹

In *Antiquities* 14, Josephus cites a passage of Strabo which explicitly states that the Jews were originally Egyptian. *Antiquities* 14.105–111 describes the riches that Crassus carried off from the temple in Jerusalem and notes that the Jews of Asia and Europe had been contributing money to the temple for a long time (*Ant.* 14.110–111). Josephus then cites Strabo as evidence of the success of the Jewish communities in Cos, Cyrene, and Egypt (*Ant.* 14.112, 115–118). After explaining that the Jews in Alexandria were given a large section of the city and have their own ethnarch, Strabo attributes the success or influence of the Jews in Alexandria to the fact that they were originally Egyptian (διὰ τὸ Αἰγυπτίους εἶναι τὸ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους, *Ant.* 14.118). As if to emphasize the importance of this passage, Josephus points out that these are Strabo's own words (*Ant.* 14.118).

28. *Ant.* 3.90–286; 4.196–262, 293–301. Thackeray and Feldman each suggest that Josephus has in mind a proposed work on the causes of Jewish customs, to which he refers in *Ant.* 1.25 and elsewhere (Thackeray 1930 95 n. c; Feldman 2000 73 n. 599, cf. 10 n. 35). There is no evidence Josephus ever wrote such a work.

29. Diod. Sic. 1.28.3, 1.55.5; Str. 17.2.5. See the discussion in Chapter 3 B page 129 ff. and page 141.

(2) Against Egyptian Origins

The reference back to *War* 1.17 in the proem of *Antiquities* reveals a sensitivity to the Jews' putative Egyptian origins. Josephus announces in *Ant* 1.5 that the work will recount the Jews's entire archaic history and their constitution. Directly echoing *War* 1.17, Josephus announces that, when writing the history of the war, he had considered describing who the Jews were from the beginning,³⁰ their fortunes and lawgiver, and the wars they had fought in ages past (*Ant.* 1.6). This précis of what would constitute an account of the Jews' ancient history omits the only specific detail Josephus mentions in *War* 1.17: the Jews' migration from Egypt. Although a reader of *War* 1.17 might have concluded that the Jews were migrants from Egypt and therefore Egyptian by origin, Josephus seems to take care not to give this impression in the proem to *Antiquities*.

Josephus's greatly expanded version of the table of nations in Gn 10 and shortened account of the genealogy in Gn 11 includes extra-biblical comments that clarify that the Hebrews and Egyptians descended from different lines and were therefore not closely related.³¹ Although Gn 10.6 merely lists the sons of Ham, including מִצְרַיִם/*Mépsōh*, *Ant.* 1.132 explains that the Mersaeans (*Μερσαίοι*) have preserved the memory of their name because everyone "here" calls Egypt Merse and the Mersaeans Egyptians.³² Josephus then omits Gn 10:13's list of the descendants of Mizraim, which

30. τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι (*Ant.* 1.6). *War* 1.17 begins the same way: τίνες τε ὄντες.

31. The table of nations in *Ant.* 1.122–147 is more than twice as long as the account in LXX Gn 10.1–32.

32. Thackeray and Feldman note that by "here" Josephus means Judea/Palestine although he is presumably writing in Rome (Thackeray 1930 65 n. e; Feldman 2000 47 n. 359).

mentions the Philistines, but again associates Mersaeus with Egypt by adding the extra-biblical comment that his eight sons occupied the land from Gaza up to Egypt (*Ant.* 1.136).³³ Genesis 10:21 introduces the line of Shem by noting that he was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber—which a Jewish reader would recognize as the namesake of the Hebrews—and Gn 10:22 then lists Shem’s five sons. *Antiquities* 1.144, by contrast, notes that Shem’s son Arphxades named the people he ruled Arphaxadeans, who are the contemporary Chaldeans. A few lines later, *Ant.* 1.146 adds to Gn 10:24’s mention of Arphaxades’s son and grandson the clarification that the Jews were originally called Hebrews after Arphaxades’s grandson Heber. Following the story of the Tower of Babel (Gn 11:1–9), Gn 11:10–26 presents a detailed genealogy that runs from Shem to Abram. To refocus the reader’s attention on the Hebrews, and therefore the Jews, Josephus announces “I shall now speak of the Hebrews,” skips directly to Heber—omitting Shem, Arpachshad, and Shelah (cf. Gn 11.10–13)—and traces his descendants down to Abram (*Ant.* 1.148). Taken together, these additions would have clarified to an attentive reader that the Jews/Hebrews were linked to the Chaldeans, but not to the Egyptians.³⁴

Although Genesis does not seem concerned with presenting a consistent picture of Abraham’s origins, the descriptions of Abraham’s call in Haran (Gn 12:1) and Abraham’s efforts to procure a wife for Isaac (Gn 24:1–10) suggest that Abraham’s “land,” “the place of his kin,” or, according the LXX, “the place where he was born” was

33. *Ant.* 1.136 also notes that the land takes its name from one son, Philistinus.

34. Although Gn 14:13 refers to Abraham as אֲבִרָם הֶעֱבֵרִי, which associates him with Eber, the corresponding passage, *Ant.* 1.176, omits this epithet.

Haran, also known as Paddan-aram in Mesopotamia.³⁵ Yet, other verses link Abraham with Chaldea. Gn 11:28 describes Ur of the Chaldeans as the birthplace of Haran, Abraham's brother, or the land of Abraham's kin; God announces in Gn 15:7 that he had brought Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldeans.

Antiquities, however, repeatedly links Abraham with Chaldea and suggests that he was a Chaldean, as do some extra-biblical sources.³⁶ Following Gn 11:28 and 11:31, *Ant.* 1.151–152 reports that Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans and that Terah and his family migrated to Haran, but adds the detail that Haran was in Mesopotamia. However, in contrast to Gen 12.1–4 where Abraham departs from Haran at God's urging, *Antiquities* reports that Abraham left *Chaldea* because of his lofty ideas about virtue and because his desire to change everyone's ideas about God caused enmity with the Chaldeans and other Mesopotamians (*Ant.* 1.154–157). To reinforce his account of Abraham, Josephus immediately cites two external sources. According to Josephus, Berossus's report of a just man among the Chaldeans who was an expert in astronomy refers to Abraham without naming him (*Ant.* 1.158). Josephus next cites Nicolas of Damascus who names Abraham explicitly and says that he came from Chaldea (*Ant.* 1.159). The *Antiquities*'s account of Abraham and Sarah's trip to Egypt, during which Abraham taught the Egyptians arithmetic and astronomy, concludes by observing that the Egyptians had been ignorant of these sciences before the coming of Abraham and that this knowledge came to Egypt from Chaldea—which implies that Abraham was Chaldean (*Ant.* 1.168).

35. See Chapter 2 A1a page 42 ff.

36. Including *Jubilees*, Eupolemus, and Acts. See Chapter 2 A3a 60 ff.

A subsequent reference to Abraham embroiders the biblical narrative by linking him with Mesopotamia. In Jacob's dream of the ladder in Gn 28, God identifies himself as the god of his father Abraham (Gen 28:13). In Josephus's account of Jacob's dream, however, God describes himself as the one who led Abraham from Mesopotamia when he was being driven out by his kin (*Ant.* 1.281), which implies that Abraham was Mesopotamian.³⁷

Antiquities also emphasizes the Jews' descent from Abraham in additions to the biblical narrative. Several passages in *Antiquities* add references to Abraham as the Jews' πρόγονος (ancestor). In the Exodus account of the burning bush, God identifies himself as the god of Moses's father, the god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and promises to lead his people to a good and spacious land (Ex 3.6–10). In the compressed version of this story in *Ant.* 2.269, God omits his self-description and says instead that the Hebrews will inhabit "this land" where Abraham, their πρόγονος, had lived. In place of Ex 12:40's report that the Israelites had lived in Egypt for 430 years, *Ant.* 2.318 dates the exodus to 430 years after the arrival of Abraham, "our ancestor," in Canaan. Similarly, when Moses returns from Mt Sinai, he gives an extra-biblical speech summarizing God's benefactions throughout history which describes Abraham as ὁ ἡμέτερος πρόγονος (*Ant.* 3.87). The narrator also describes Abraham as "our ancestor" when commenting on David's capture of Jerusalem (πρόγονος, *Ant.* 7.67) and when explaining the term *Pharaoh* (πάππος,

37. It is not clear why Josephus describes Abraham as "Mesopotamian" instead of "Chaldean" here. *Ant.* 1.157's comment that "the Chaldeans and other Mesopotamians" disagreed with Abraham may imply that all Chaldeans are Mesopotamians. The LXX might also have influenced Josephus: LXX Gn 28:5 switches Bethuel's epithet from MT's "the Aramean in Paddan-aram" to "the Syrian in Mesopotamia." The LXX consistently changes "Paddan-aram" to "Mesopotamia."

Ant. 8.155).³⁸ Other passages emphasize that the Jews were from the γένος of Abraham. In his account of the Israelites' decision to attack Hormah over Moses's objections (cf. Nu 14:39–45), Josephus adds the Israelites' comment that they will not tolerate Moses's tyranny because they are also of Abraham's γένος (*Ant.* 4.4). In the *Antiquities*' version of their speeches from Josh 22, both Joshua and the tribes declare that they are from the γένος of Abraham.³⁹

Unlike Philo who emphasizes in *Exposition*, aimed at a broad audience, that Abraham *acted* like a Chaldean and that God cut him off from the Chaldeans to be the root of a new γένος.⁴⁰ Josephus carefully stresses to his Roman audience throughout *Antiquities* that Abraham was the Jews' ancestor and that he was Chaldean or Mesopotamian. The *Antiquities*' portrait of Abraham implies that the Jews were Chaldean or Mesopotamian by origin.

Josephus's account of the birth of Moses, who was well-known in antiquity as the Jews' founder and law-giver,⁴¹ emphasizes that Moses was not Egyptian, but a Hebrew of the γένος of Abraham. Ex 1:15–22 recounts Pharaoh's unsuccessful attempt to have every male Israelite infant thrown into the river—presumably to halt the Israelites' increase—and Ex 2:1–4 reports the birth of a boy to a certain Levite, who then hides the child in a basket. When Pharaoh's daughter opens the basket, she immediately concludes

38. πάππος can mean *grandfather* or, more generally, *ancestor*.

39. Joshua: *Ant.* 5.97, cf. Josh 22:1–8; tribes: *Ant.* 5.113, cf. Josh 22:21–29.

40. See Chapter 2 A3a 63 ff.

41. Each of the four extant ethnographic excursuses about the Jews mentions Moses; see Chapter 3 B page 128 ff.

that the child must be a Hebrew (Ex 2:6). His sister then offers to fetch a Hebrew wet nurse (Ex 2:7). When the child is weaned, Pharaoh's daughter makes him her son and names him Moses because she had drawn him from the water (Ex 2:10).

Josephus's expanded account emphasizes Moses's greatness, but also carefully highlights that Moses was not an Egyptian, but an Israelite. In extra-biblical additions, *Antiquities* reports the prediction of an Egyptian sacred scribe that an Israelite child will debase the Egyptians' authority (*Ant.* 2.205) and God's prediction to Amram that his child will deliver the Israelites from their distress (*Ant.* 2.216). In *Antiquities*, instead of immediately concluding that the child in the basket is a Hebrew, Pharaoh's daughter admires him and sends for a wet-nurse (*Ant.* 2.224–225). When the infant refuses to suckle, Moses's sister explains that none of the wet-nurses have kinship ties (συγγένεια) with the child and that he might suckle a Hebrew woman of his own stock (ὁμόφυλος; *Ant.* 2.226). Curiously, Josephus provides an explicitly Egyptian etymology for Moses's name in place of the Hebrew etymology in Ex 2:10 (*Ant.* 2.228), but then immediately notes that he was the noblest of the Hebrews, comments that Abraham was his “seventh father,”⁴² and traces Moses's lineage back through Amram to Abraham (*Ant.* 2.229). The predictions of the birth of an Israelite who will oppose the Egyptians, the child's lack of συγγένεια with the Egyptians, and his ὁμοφυλία with the Hebrews clearly establishes that Moses was not an Egyptian, in contrast to Philo's account which portrays Moses as having two sets of parents and upbringings.⁴³ Josephus emphasizes Moses's descent from

42. Philo describes Moses as seventh in descent from the founder of the γένος, but does not name Abraham (*Mos.* 1.7).

43. See Chapter 2 A3b page 75 ff.

Abraham to underscore that he was an Israelite, despite his Egyptian name.⁴⁴

As Ezekiel the Tragedian and Philo do, Josephus modifies the account of Moses's trip to Midian to avoid portraying him as an Egyptian.⁴⁵ In Ex 2, after killing the Egyptian taskmaster, Moses flees to Midian and defends Reuel's daughters from the shepherds at the well (Ex 2:15–17). When Reuel asks why they have returned from the well early, his daughters reply that “an Egyptian” rescued them from the shepherds and watered their flocks (Ex 2:19), which suggests that Moses spoke, dressed, looked or acted like an Egyptian.⁴⁶ In *Ant.* 2.261, by contrast, Reuel's daughters describe the help they received from “a stranger.”

Antiquities explicitly rejects claims that the Hebrews were Egyptian by origin and avoids giving the impression that they had interbred with the Egyptians. Exodus 12:38 reports that “a mixed multitude” departed Egypt with the Israelites. Although the Pentateuch offers no further details, Philo comments that they were the children of Egyptian women and Hebrew fathers (*Mos* 1.147).⁴⁷ Josephus omits mention of the mixed multitude and reports only that the Hebrews departed (*Ant.* 2.315).⁴⁸ The danger of “ethnic mixing” with natives, and Egyptians specifically, may have been a Greco-Roman trope. Livy comments that the Macedonians holding Alexandria, Seleucia, and Babylonia have degenerated into Egyptians, Syrians, and Parthians, presumably by inter-

44. As Nodet comments (Nodet 2003 122 n. 2).

45. See Chapter 2 A3b page 76 f.

46. See also page 50 n. 24.

47. See Chapter 2 A3b page 73.

48. As Feldman also notes (Feldman 2000 223 n. 832).

breeding (Livy 38.11.17). Josephus implies that mixing between Egyptians and Macedonians led to chronic sedition in Alexandria, but emphasizes that the Jews remained pure, meaning unmixed (*Ap.* 2.69).⁴⁹ Josephus may have omitted mention of the “mixed multitude” of Ex 12:38, unlike Philo, to avoid the charge of ethnic mixing with the Egyptians.

Josephus openly acknowledges and rejects the allegation that the Jews were Egyptians by origin in his account of Jacob’s departure from Canaan to Egypt (cf. Gn 46). Josephus comments that he had thought to omit the names of the seventy members of Jacob’s family who accompanied Jacob to Egypt on account of their difficulty (*Ant.* 2.176), but considered it necessary to mention them in order to answer those who suppose that “we” are not Mesopotamians, but Egyptians (*Ant.* 2.177). *Antiquities* 2.177–183 then lists each of Jacobs’s sons and their descendants, providing three subtotals (*Ant.* 2.179, 180, 182) and final reckoning which adds to seventy (*Ant.* 2.183), the figure Josephus cites in *Ant.* 2.176. Josephus, who explicitly omits lists of biblical names elsewhere,⁵⁰ makes no attempt to demonstrate, as he might have done, that the names are Mesopotamian, but offers the list and his detailed reckoning as an ersatz proof of the claim that the “we” are not Egyptian, but Mesopotamian. Josephus assumes, like the author of the Book of Judith, that his readers know allegations that the Jews were originally Egyptian and thinks these assertions need refuting.

49. See Chapter 4 B3 page 182 f.

50. For example, *Ant.* 7.369 (David’s officers, cf. 1 Chr 27:1–34), *Ant.* 11.152 (Israelites who put away non-Jewish wives, cf. Ezra 10:1–44), and *Ant.* 12.57 (names of the 70 translators of the Pentateuch into Greek) (Feldman 2000 178 n. 454).

In his summary of Jewish law, Josephus rejects the claim that Moses was a leper who led a band of lepers out of Egypt. Josephus replaces the Levitical prescription that a leper should live outside the camp (Lev 13:46, 14:3) with the stronger claim that Moses “expelled” (*Ant.* 3.261) and “completely banished” (*Ant.* 3.264) lepers from the city.⁵¹ One should thus deride anyone who claims that Moses was a leper and led a band of lepers from Egypt (*Ant.* 3.265), Josephus argues, because Moses would never have enacted such harsh laws which would dishonor himself (*Ant.* 3.266). Instead, he might have prescribed laws which treated lepers favorably (*Ant.* 3.267). Josephus concludes by observing that those who make such claims are motivated solely by malignity (*Ant.* 3.268). Josephus’s attack on reports that Moses led a band of fellow lepers out of Egypt presupposes that his Roman readers knew these stories. The account of these stories in *Against Apion* suggests that they depicted the Jews as *Egyptian* lepers. Josephus’s first objection to Manetho in *Ap.* 1.229 is that he mixes the Jews up with a group of Egyptian lepers, a claim Josephus repeats in *Ap.* 1.253. Denying that the Jews and Egyptian lepers were identical is the basis of Josephus’s objections to the accounts of Chaeremon and Lysimachus (*Ap.* 1.302, 314). Thus, although claims that the Jews were lepers might *ipso facto* be damning, if these stories always represented the Jews as *Egyptian* lepers, demonstrating that Moses’s legislation about leprosy disproves these stories also proves that the Jews were not Egyptians.

Josephus might also have modified the biblical account of Mt Sinai to emphasize that the Jews do not follow Egyptian practices and are therefore not Egyptians by origin.

51. See, however, *m. Kel.* 1.7 which notes that lepers are sent out of walled cities in the Land of Israel.

Antiquities 3.91 recasts the biblical version of the second commandment, which forbids the making of images or likenesses of *anything* in the heavens on the earth or under the sea for worship (Ex 20:5 = Dt 5:8), by forbidding only the making of the image of a ζῷον, which can mean an “animal” (excluding humans) or a “living creature” (including humans).⁵² Other passages in Josephus which mention the ban on images use different terminology: Herod dedicated no images in Judea because the law prohibits statues (ἄγαλμα) and sculpted forms (τύπος, *Ant.* 15.339); Pilate’s bust/*imago* (προτομή) of Caesar violated the prohibition on images (εἰκών, *Ant.* 18.55; cf. δείκλον, *War* 2.170); the Jews objected to Gaius’s plan to introduce a statue (ἀνδριάς, *Ant.* 18.258, 261, 268) of himself into the temple because the law opposes images of God or man (δείκλον, *War* 2.185). By contrast, the accounts of Herod’s golden eagle in both *War* and *Antiquities* specify a ban on likenesses of ζῷα: *Antiquities* 17.151 notes that the Law forbids setting up images (εἰκών) or dedicating (likenesses of) any ζῷον; *War* 1.650 lists images (εἰκών), busts/*imagines* (προτομή), and representations of any ζῷον. Given the widespread derision of the Egyptian practice of worshipping ζῷα⁵³ and Josephus’s insistence in *Ant.* 2.177 that the Jews are not Egyptian, it is probable, but not certain, that Josephus meant to emphasize that the second commandment prohibited the worship of animals, which would imply that the Hebrews could not have been Egyptians.⁵⁴

52. On the fifth day of Creation, God creates τὰ ζῷα (*Ant.* 1.32), and subsequently presents τὰ ζῷα to Adam (*Ant.* 1.35)—which suggests that man and τὰ ζῷα are different. After the flood, however, God forbids the shedding of human blood, but allows the eating of all the *other* ζῷα (*Ant.* 1.102)—which implies that man is part of τὰ ζῷα. Aristotle holds that man is by nature a political ζῷον (Arist. *Pol.* I.1253a 2–3).

53. ζῷον is a standard term used to describe what Egyptians worship (e.g. Str. 17.1.40; Diod. Sic. 1.83.1, 1.90.4, 2.1.2; *Ap.* 1.621). Herodotus, however, uses θηρίον to describe both domestic and sacred animals (e.g. Hdt. 2.36.2, 2.65.2–3).

54. Nodet argues that *Ant.* 3.91 is an implicit reply to the accusation that the temple contained a statue of a golden ass (Nodet 2003 164 n. 4; cf. *Ap.* 2.80, Tac. *Hist.* 5.4.2).

Josephus may have omitted the golden calf incident to avoid depicting the Israelites as Apis-worshippers. In Exodus, after receiving the Ten Commandments (Ex 19) and presenting them to the people (Ex 20:1–14), Moses reascends Mt Sinai and remains there for forty days and nights (Ex 24:12, 18). The Israelites, not knowing what has become of Moses, ask Aaron to make them a god and Aaron fashions a golden bull-calf (ἑἄϑ/μύσχος, Ex 32:4) which they worship (Ex 32.1–6). Moses learns of the golden calf from God, returns from the mountain, breaks the tablets, and blames Aaron for the transgression (Ex 32:7–26). Subsequently, he reascends Mt Sinai and obtains new tablets (Ex 34:1–28). In *Antiquities*, immediately after hearing the Ten Commandments (*Ant.* 3.89–92), the Hebrews ask Moses to bring them laws from God (*Ant.* 3.93, cf. Ex 20.19). As in Ex 32:1, the people begin to worry about Moses’s extended absence (*Ant.* 3.95). In place of the golden calf incident, however, Josephus substitutes a three section account of the distress in the Hebrews’ camp (*Ant.* 3.96–99). Although some think that Moses has been killed by a wild animal and others think he has ascended to the divinity, the sensible ones reject both of these views and, despite their anxiety, remain in the camp as Moses had directed them. Moses’s return fills the people with joy (*Ant.* 3.99).

Scholars have proposed several explanations for *Antiquities*’ omission of the golden calf episode. The most common suggestion is that Josephus did not want to portray the Hebrews as worshipping an animal, particularly given Apion’s charge that the temple contained a statue of a golden ass (*Ap.* 2.80).⁵⁵ Another possibility is that

Some scholars propose that the accusation about the statue of the ass explains Josephus’s omission of the golden calf, see page 206.

55. Thackeray 1930 362–363; Spilsbury 1998 130; Nodet 2003 163 n. 1 with 161 n. 4; Feldman 2007 141; Pearce 2007 294; Barbu 2012 206, 210. On the statue of an ass in the temple see also Tac. *Hist.* 5.4.2.

Josephus opposed the worship of images.⁵⁶ Von Ehrenkrook argues that *Antiquities* 1-11 presents an idealized vision of the Jews' pious, aniconic constitution that draws on Roman ideas of their virtuous, aniconic past.⁵⁷ Feldman proposes several other reasons including that the episode portrays the Israelites as “fickle” in light of all God had done for them, that it depicts Moses as hot-headed, and that it suggests that Aaron was unsuited for the priesthood—a point which Josephus, who was proud to belong to the first of the twenty-four courses of priests, would have found especially sensitive.⁵⁸ Recently, Spilsbury has argued that Josephus omits the golden calf episode because he is more interested in priestly matters such as the priests vestments and the tabernacle.⁵⁹

Although it is perilous to argue from silence, and Josephus might have had more than one reason for omitting the golden calf episode, it is very likely that he did not want to portray the Israelites as engaged in the Egyptian practice of Apis-worship. Biblical and post-biblical traditions which Josephus might have known suggest that the Jews worshipped idols in Egypt or connected the golden calf with Apis worship.⁶⁰ Both Joshua and Ezekiel note that the Israelites worshipped Egyptian idols when they were in Egypt (Josh 24:14, Ezek 20:7), and LXX Jeremiah 26:7 explicitly describes Apis as ὁ μόσχος, the term used in LXX Ex 32:4 to describe the golden calf. Artapanus makes Moses the source of Egyptian animal worship, including Apis specifically (Artap. 3.4, 12). In Acts, Stephen comments that the Israelites did not want to obey Moses at Mt Sinai, but turned

56. Spilsbury 1998 185.

57. Ehrenkrook 2011 148, *passim*. However, Josephus does describe Jeroboam's two golden heifers, but comments that it was a transgression of the law and led to the Hebrew's defeat and captivity (*Ant.* 8.225–29).

58. Feldman 2007 141.

59. Spilsbury 2014 481–482.

60. See Chapter 2 A2b page 56 ff. and A3b 77 ff.

their hearts to Egypt and made a calf (μόσχος, Acts 7:39–41). Philo explicitly describes the golden calf (μόσχος) as an Egyptian idol (*Post.* 158) or the Egyptian delusion (*Fug.* 90), or comments that the Israelites built a golden bull (ταῦρος) in imitation of the most sacred animal in Egypt (*Mos.* 2.162) or the Egyptian delusion (*Mos.* 2.270; *Spec.* 3.125).

The four extant Greek and Latin ethnographies of the Jews claim that they were Egyptian by origin⁶¹ and, as a migratory people, the Jews' customs would be explained by their Egyptian origin or the circumstances of their migration from Egypt. Tacitus specifically links Jewish practices with their Egyptian origins and comments that the Jews adopted some Egyptian practices (care of the dead, *Hist.* 5.5.3), but rejected others (sacrificing a ram in derision of Ammon, *Hist.* 5.4.2). Yet, although Tacitus contrasts Egyptian animal worship with the Jews' worship of one god, he claims that the Jews regard images of god in the form of *man* as impious (*Hist.* 5.5.4) and worship⁶² a statue of an ass (*Hist.* 5.4.2). Tacitus also links the Jews' practice of sacrificing bulls to the Egyptian worship of Apis, but attributes it the Jews' contrariness (*Hist.* 5.4.2).

Josephus and his Roman audience would have been very familiar with Apis worship. Josephus specifically mocks the worship of bulls in his derisive account of Egyptian animal worship (*Ap.* 1.254). Diodorus Siculus describes the care of living Apis and reports in detail on the rites after his death (*Diod. Sic.* 1.84.5–85.5). Similarly, Strabo's account of Egypt includes a special section on how Apis is shown to visitors (*Str.* 17.1.32). Suetonius comments on Titus's presence, wearing a diadem, at the dedication of a new Apis bull (*Suet. Tit.* 5.3). Pliny provides a long account of Apis and

61. Chapter 3 B, page 128 ff.

62. *Sacro*, possibly “revere” or “dedicate.”

describes Apis's turning away from Germanicus on his visit to Egypt as a omen of Germanicus's death (Plin. *HN* 8.185). Tacitus, who links the Jewish sacrificial practice with Apis as noted above, may have omitted Germanicus's visit to Apis deliberately in order to portray him more favorably.⁶³

Thus, given Jewish traditions that linked the golden calf to Egyptian idol worship and Philo's portrayal of the golden calf as worship of Apis, Josephus, who displays a clear sensitivity in *Antiquities* to claims that the Jews were Egyptians, might have concluded that the account of the Hebrews praying to a statue of a calf immediately after leaving Egypt would have struck his Roman readers an example of Apis worship. This would have been a telling reason, among possible others, for omitting the golden calf episode.⁶⁴

Josephus's sensitivity to the idea that Jews were originally Egyptian may explain his evident concern to distinguish between Jews and Egyptians in events during the rule of Tiberius that Roman sources link closely together. Tacitus reports a senatorial discussion under Tiberius about banning Egyptian and Jewish rites, and a senatorial edict expelling from Italy 4,000 freedmen⁶⁵ tainted by "that superstition" (*ea superstitione*) in the singular, which appears to refer to both Egyptians and Jews (Tac. *Ann.* 2.85).

63. Germanicus's visit to Egypt: Tac. *Ann.* 2.59–61; his death: *Ann.* 2.69–72. Smelik and Hemelrijk suggest Tacitus's omission was deliberate (Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984 1943).

64. In an article primarily about Philo's account of the golden calf, Barbu notes that Philo could have omitted it, as Josephus does in order not "to reinforce the opinion, current in antiquity, according to which the Jews were in truth themselves of Egyptian origin" (author's translation). Barbu does not develop this comment, but links Josephus's fears to the issue of animal worship generally and to the claim that the temple contained a statue of a golden ass (Barbu 2012 206, cf. 210).

65. Or the descendants of 4,000 freedmen: *quattuor milia libertini generis*.

Suetonius notes that Tiberius abolished foreign cults, particularly Egyptian and Jewish rites, and forced all those who held to “such a superstition” (*superstitione ea*) to burn their vestments and paraphernalia, which again appears to refer to foreign cults generally or to both Egyptians and Jews. Suetonius goes on to report that Jews of military age were sent to insalubrious provinces, while Tiberius banished from Rome the remaining people of the same *genus* or following similar rites (Suet. *Tib.* 36).

After the *Testimonium Flavianum*, Josephus reports that a terrible event befell the Jews and that, at the same time, there was a scandal at the temple of Isis (*Ant.* 18.65). *Antiquities* 18.65–80 describes at length the seduction of Paulina, as Chapter 4 notes.⁶⁶ Josephus then reports briefly on a scandal involving the Jews and recounts how a reprobate, law-violating, Jewish fugitive and some cronies defrauded Fulvia, a Roman woman of high rank who had come to Jewish practices (*Ant.* 18.81–82). When Tiberius learned of the deception from Fulvia’s husband, he banished the Jews from Rome, and the consuls drafted 4,000 Jews and sent them Sardinia (*Ant.* 18.82–84). Although he blames the seduction of Paulina solely on the priests of Isis (*Ant.* 18.80), despite the involvement of Mundus and his evil freedwoman, Josephus blames the expulsion of the Jews on the acts of a few wicked men, only one of whom he identifies as a Jew (*Ant.* 18.84).

Though the compression of Tacitus’s and Suetonius’s accounts somewhat confuses matters, both sources link the expulsions of Jews and Egyptians and may have thought the two groups were closely related albeit distinct.⁶⁷ Assuming that *Antiquities*

66. See Chapter 4 B2, page 178 f.

67. Gaston May comments that Tacitus and Suetonius are confused and regard the Jews and Egyptians as a single *superstitio* despite knowing that they have different rites (May 1938 20–21, 21 n. 1). Conflating Tac. *Ann.* 2.85 with Josephus’s account, Syme

18 describes the events to which Tacitus and Suetonius refer,⁶⁸ Josephus may have thought that it was important to distinguish the two incidents and emphasize that Jews and Egyptians were distinct by attributing one scandal to the priests of Isis, thereby blackening Isis-worship in general, and attributing the other to a single Jew and three confederates, thereby exonerating the Jews as a whole.

C. Against Apion

(1) Suggestions of Egyptian Origins

Josephus's two comments in *Apion* about the Egyptian origins of the practice of circumcision might have suggested that the Jews were originally Egyptian. In the section of *Apion* which provides references to the Jews in Greek authors, Josephus cites Herodotus's claim that the Syrians of Palestine admit that they learned circumcision from the Egyptians (*Ap.* 1.168–171, cf. *Hdt.* 2.104) and notes that Herodotus must have been referring to the Jews since they are the only inhabitants of Palestine who practice circumcision. Subsequently, Josephus replies to Apion's jeering about the Jews' practice of circumcision (*Ap.* 2.137) by noting that Egyptian priests circumcise and, according to Herodotus, taught the practice to others (*Ap.* 2.141–142). Josephus's comments are consistent with the claims of Diodorus Siculus and Strabo that circumcision proves the Jews' Egyptian origin.⁶⁹ However, these stray remarks would probably have detracted

(followed by Stern), thinks Tacitus's *ea superstitione* refers only to the Jews (Syme 1958 II:486 n. 2; Stern II:72). Stern thinks Suetonius's *superstitione ea* refers to both Jews and Egyptians (Stern II: 113).

68. Tacitus and Suetonius place these events in the time of Tiberius; the account in Josephus falls in his narrative of the procuratorship of Pilate.

69. See Chapter 3 B pages 129 and 141.

little from one of *Apion*'s main goals: subtly proving that the Jews were not originally Egyptian.

(2) Against Egyptian Origins

According to the summary at the end of book 2, proving that the Jews are not Egyptian by origin is one of the principal goals of *Against Apion*. However, instead of introducing this goal in the proem, Josephus leads his readers to this claim subtly and states it openly only in his conclusion (*Ap.* 2.289). This may suggest that Josephus thought contemporary claims that the Jews were originally Egyptian were very damaging and required careful refutation. Comparing the summary in *Ap.* 2.288–290 with the proem and the restatement of the work's goals in *Ap.* 1.58–59 shows that demonstrating that the Jews were not Egyptians is a central theme of *Against Apion*, and reveals Josephus's rhetorical skill in leading his readers to this conclusion by the use of *insinuatio* and keywords.

In the conclusion to *Apion*, Josephus comments that he has sufficiently⁷⁰ fulfilled the promise he had made earlier and then lists his three accomplishments. Although “our accusers” (κατήγορος) asserted that the Jewish γένος was very recent, Josephus has cited many ancient witnesses demonstrating its antiquity (*Ap.* 2.288). They claimed that the Jews' ancestors were Egyptian, but Josephus has shown that the Jews came to Egypt from elsewhere (*Ap.* 2.289). Although they falsely claimed (καταψεύδομαι) that the Jews had been expelled from Egypt because of bodily defilement, Josephus has shown they returned to their own land by choice and with strength (*Ap.* 2.289). They reviled

70. ἰκανῶς. This is also the first word of *Ap.* 1.1.

(λοιδορέω) Moses, but time and God have proven his virtue (*Ap.* 2.290).

The proem gives a very different picture of *Apion*'s goals and concerns. Josephus begins by reminding his readers that his *Antiquities*, which was a history of 5,000 years, demonstrated that the Jewish γένος was very ancient, showed that it had its own first foundation or substance (ἢ πρῶτα ὑπόστασις ἴδια), and described how the Jews established themselves in the land they now occupy (*Ap.* 1.1). However, since many people pay attention to slanders (βλασφημία, *Ap.* 1.2) spread out of malice (δυσμένεια, *Ap.* 1.2) and discredit his writings about the Jews' antiquity, claiming that the Greek historians do not mention the Jews, Josephus has decided to address "all of these matters" (*Ap.* 1.3). Thus, *Apion* will refute (ἐλέγχω) the malicious (δυσμένεια) and deliberate falsehoods (ψευδολογία) of the Jews' detractors (λοιδορέω), correct the ignorance of others, and instruct all who wish to know the truth about the Jews' antiquity (*Ap.* 1.3). Citing sources that the Greeks judge to be the most reliable, Josephus will use their own words to refute (ἐλέγχω) those writing about the Jews slanderously (βλασφημῶς) and falsely (ψευδῶς; *Ap.* 1.4).

The proem contains several oddities. Josephus's comment that *Antiquities* showed that the Jewish γένος had its own first ὑπόστασις is unusual because *Antiquities* never makes this claim and because the precise meaning of ὑπόστασις is unclear.⁷¹ The term ὑπόστασις can signify the foundation of a building, a substance, or something's essence or nature.⁷² Josephus's conclusion in *Ap.* 2.289 suggests that he is preempting

71. ὑπόστασις appears in only two passages in *Antiquities*, both of which may be textually uncertain. Niese includes ὑπόστασις in Antony's letter to the Tyrians (*Ant.* 14.320) where it means "revolt" or "resistance." The Loeb edition has ἀπόστασις. Both Niese and the Loeb have ὑπόστασις in *Ant.* 18.24 where it means "confidence" or "resolution." However, ms. E, a tenth–eleventh century CE epitome, has ἔνστασις.

72. LSJ s.v. ὑπόστασις I: sediment; II: foundation; III:substance; II.3: essence. LSJ

claims that the Jews were originally Egyptian by asserting in *Ap.* 1.1 that they had their own first nature, essence, or origin, but the proem does not make this clear. Josephus also claims in *Ap.* 1.1 that *Antiquities* described how the Jews settled the land they now occupy. However, the proem of *Antiquities* does not announce that providing an account of the Jews' conquest of their land is a goal of the work, although *Ant.* 5.1–131 contains a detailed account of the conquest of Canaan.⁷³ Though Josephus's adds the qualification that the Jews "now" occupy this land, he may, in context, be trying to emphasize that the Jews' have occupied their land since antiquity, which would support his contention that the Jews were not Egyptian.

The "matters" Josephus claims he will address in *Ap.* 1.2 appear to be two aspects of a single issue: slanderous claims that the Jews are not ancient versus evidence for the Jews' antiquity, if any, in Greek or other sources. However, no extant Greek or Latin source maintains that the Jews are not ancient,⁷⁴ and *Apion* never cites an author that makes this claim.⁷⁵ By contrast, Hecataeus of Abdera, one of the earliest authors to mention the Jews, dates their origins to ancient times.⁷⁶ Similarly, Diodorus Siculus reports that the Jews migrated to the land between Arabia and Syria in the remote past.⁷⁷

provides *Ap.* 1.1 as an example of the meaning "origin." However, cf. Bailly 2000 2032–2033, which does not include this meaning.

73. Cf. *War* 1.17 which comments that narrating the Jews' ancient history would involve describing the quantity of land they seized over time (*War* 1.17).

74. Goodman observes that only Celsus in the late second century CE seems to question the Jews' antiquity, but notes that the loss of anti-Jewish literature from antiquity precludes certainty (Goodman 1999 52; cf. Origin, *Cels.* 4.33–36).

75. As both Goodman and Droge also comment (Goodman 1999 52; Droge 1996 117).

76. Diod. Sic. 40.3.1. Hecataeus of Abdera c. 360–290 BCE (*OCD4*).

77. Diod. Sic. 1.28.1–2. Diodorus reports that the Jews' migration took place at the time when Belus settled Babylon and Danaus founded Argos.

Tacitus, Josephus's younger contemporary, provides six alternative accounts of the Jews' origins, three of which date to the distant past.⁷⁸ Tacitus also denigrates the Jews' customs, but accepts that they are ancient.⁷⁹

The key to understanding the connection between the proem and the conclusion of *Apion* is the restatement of the work's goals in *Ap.* 1.58–59 and the structure of the rest of the work.⁸⁰ Josephus promises to answer those who try to prove from the silence of Greek sources that the establishment⁸¹ of the Jews is recent (*Ap.* 1.58), to provide evidence for the Jews' antiquity from the writings of others, and to demonstrate the absurdities of the slanders (βλασφημέω) of the Jews' slanderers (βλασφημέω, *Ap.* 1.59). The rest of *Apion* follows the plan set out in *Ap.* 1.58–59 closely (see Table 4 on page 230). *Ap.* 1.60–68 explains the silence of Greek historians on the Jewish people. *Ap.* 1.69–218 cites evidence for the Jews' antiquity from non-Jewish sources. *Ap.* 1.219 announces that one topic remains: showing that the libels (διαβολή) and insults (λοιδορία) aimed at the Jews are false (ψευδής). This topic occupies the central section of the work in *Ap.* 1.219–2.144, which examines accounts of the Jews' departure from Egypt.

Comparing the proem, the plan of *Ap.* 1.58–59, and the structure of the rest of

78. Tac. *Hist.* 5.2.1. The first proposed origin took place at the time when Saturn was deposed by Jove, the second took place during the reign of Isis, and the fifth refers to a people celebrated in Homer. Tacitus's various accounts of Jewish origins may be partly ironic; see Gruen 2011 187–196.

79. Tac. *Hist.* 5.5.1. As Goodman also notes (Goodman 1999 52).

80. Echoing *Ap.* 1.1, Josephus uses ικανῶς as the first word of *Ap.* 1.58 to announce that he has “sufficiently” proven the inferiority of Greek historiography. Cf. *Ap.* 2.288.

81. κατάστασις; cf. ὑπόστασις, *Ap.* 1.1.

Apion to the conclusion in *Ap.* 2.288–290 reveals clearly the actual goals of the work. *Ap.* 1.60–68, which explains the silence of Greek authors on the Jews, and *Ap.* 1.69–218, which provides evidence for the Jews’ antiquity, justify Josephus’s claim in *Ap.* 2.288 that he has demonstrated the Jews’ antiquity by citing ancient sources despite claims that no such evidence existed. This matches the goal set out in *Ap.* 1.2 of disproving the assertion that silence in Greek sources proved that the Jews were not ancient. Although *Ap.* 1.2–4 links “slanders” with assertions about the Jews’ antiquity, *Ap.* 1.59 and 1.219–2.144 show that “slanders” is a separate issue: the allegations that Jews were Egyptian by origin, which Josephus claims in *Ap.* 2.289 to have refuted. Revealingly, even when ostensibly addressing the the Jews’ antiquity in *Ap.* 1.69–218, Josephus comments several times that he has proven that the Jews were not of Egyptian origin. Josephus’s evident need to cloak his goal of proving that the Jews were not originally Egyptian under the rubric of discussing antiquity or “slanders” suggests that he considered the issue to be extremely delicate and that it required careful refutation.

Josephus uses the techniques of *insinuatio* and keywords to address the Jews’ putative Egyptian origins without advertising his intention to do so. Latin rhetoricians developed the doctrine of *insinuatio* as a method of beginning a speech on a difficult topic.⁸² Both Cicero and *Rhetorica ad Herennium* prescribe using *insinuatio* for a strange (Cic. *Inv.* 1.15.20) or discreditable (*Rhet. Her.* 1.6.9) cause, which they define as one where the subject itself alienates the audience. The goal of *insinuatio* is “to enter unseen into the mind of the audience by dissimulation and a circuitous route” (Cic. *Inv.*

82. On the relation between between *insinuatio* and earlier concepts in Greek rhetoric, see Bower 1958.

1.15.20).⁸³ This can involve substituting one matter which the audience approves for another which they dislike (Cic. *Inv.* 1.17.24). Although *insinuatio* is a type of *exordium* or introduction to a speech, Josephus appears to employ this technique throughout *Apion*. The proem omits the issue of the Jews' putative Egyptian origins and focusses instead on the Jews' antiquity, which no one disputed. Throughout the body of *Apion*, Josephus argues that the Jews were not originally Egyptian under the pretense of addressing the issues of antiquity and slander.

Jacqueline de Romilly, in her seminal work on Thucydides, emphasizes the importance of “the art of implied meaning” in Greek literature.⁸⁴ Rather than signaling their meaning openly, de Romilly argues, Greek authors of the classical period linked themes subtly using verbal similarities and correspondences throughout a work.⁸⁵ This could include “pivotal words” used in different passages to set up intentional parallels, such as in the antithetical speeches of Thucydides.⁸⁶ Far from being a technique limited to “difficult authors,” de Romilly notes that it was commonly used by even the simplest authors, who would have expected their audience to be able to follow to verbal correspondences to understand an author's intentions.⁸⁷ Josephus uses the same technique by establishing keywords in the proem that he reuses throughout the work. Josephus describes the malice (δυσμένεια, *Ap.* 1.2, 1.3) with which those who insult the Jews (λοιδορέω, *Ap.* 1.3) have spread slander (βλασφημία, *Ap.* 1.2, 1.4) and falsehoods (ψευδολογία, *Ap.* 1.3; ψευδής, *Ap.* 1.4), and promises to refute or convict them (ἐλέγχω,

83. Author's translation.

84. de Romilly 2012 49.

85. de Romilly 2012, 20–23, 49–59, and *passim*.

86. de Romilly 2012 119.

87. de Romilly 2012 50, 57.

Ap. 1.3, 1.4). Josephus draws on these keywords in *Ap.* 1.59, when he restates his goals (βλασφημέω, twice), in his conclusion in *Ap.* 2.289 (καταψεύδομαι), and frequently in the rest of the work when he refutes the claims of specific authors that the Jews were originally Egyptian, as Table 5 on page 232 demonstrates. Repetition of these keywords links various sections of *Apion* in the mind of the audience from the proem, which mentions only the issue of antiquity, through the body of the work to the conclusion in *Ap.* 2.289, which directly addresses the issue of Egyptian origins. By means of keywords, Josephus refutes claims of Egyptian origins subtly without ever having to state openly that it is an important goal of *Apion*.

Josephus skillfully uses the introduction to the section on the Jews' antiquity (*Ap.* 1.69–71) and the evidence of his first witness, Manetho (*Ap.* 1.73–105), to demonstrate that the Jews are not Egyptian by origin. Just as the Greeks would do, Josephus promises to cite the evidence of the Jews' neighbors to establish their antiquity (*Ap.* 1.69). This means using the Egyptians and Phoenicians as sources because, given their malice towards the Jews, no one would doubt their evidence (*Ap.* 1.70). Josephus can not say the same thing about the Chaldeans because they are the originators of "our γένος" and this συγγένεια accounts for the references to the Jews in their records (*Ap.* 1.71). Thus, while apparently discussing methodology, Josephus establishes two facts about Jewish origins. *Apion* 1.71 asserts that the Jews were originally Chaldean.⁸⁸ Moreover, if the Chaldeans' συγγένεια explains their lack of malice towards the Jews, the malice of the

88. This undermines the only Chaldean evidence Josephus cites, that of Berossus (*Ap.* 1.128–160), which Josephus claims proves the Jews' antiquity (*Ap.* 1.160). Josephus never offers Chaldean evidence to prove their συγγένεια with the Jews.

Egyptians and Phoenicians proves that they have no συγγένεια with the Jews.

Josephus cites Manetho ostensibly as the first witness to the Jews' antiquity, but actually to identify the Jews with the Hycsos and demonstrate that the Jews came to Egypt from elsewhere. Although the passages from Manetho do not mention the Jews explicitly, Josephus introduces the first citation by commenting that Manetho wrote "about us" in his *Aegyptiaca* (*Ap.* 1.74). *Apion* 1.75–82 reproduces a passage of Manetho that describes how an obscure people from the east, known as the Hycsos or "king-shepherds" (*Ap.* 1.82) invaded Egypt and set themselves up as kings. After their defeat and expulsion from Egypt, the Hycsos, fearing the Assyrians, built Jerusalem to accommodate their huge numbers (*Ap.* 1.86–90). Having noted that Manetho claims that other Egyptian records describe the so-called shepherds as "captives" (*Ap.* 1.91), Josephus uses both terms to identify the Hycsos with the Jews. In a non-sequitur, Josephus argues that Manetho's observation about the Egyptians records is correct because "our earliest ancestors" tended flocks, were nomads, and were called shepherds (*Ap.* 1.91). Furthermore, it was "not unreasonable" to call them captives because Joseph told the Egyptian king that he was a captive (*Ap.* 1.92).

After reminding his readers that he is citing Egyptian witnesses to the Jews' antiquity (*Ap.* 1.93), Josephus cites a long chronology of Egyptian kings from Manetho (*Ap.* 1.94–102) before returning to the Hycsos–Jews identification. Taking this as proven, Josephus asserts that Manetho's chronology demonstrates that "the so-called shepherds, our ancestors" left Egypt and settled in "this land" long before Danaus came to Argos (*Ap.* 1.103). Josephus concludes the section on Manetho by commenting that

Manetho has provided evidence from Egyptian sources on two crucial points: he has shown that “we” came into Egypt from elsewhere and that “we” left it 1,000 years before the Trojan War (*Ap.* 1.104). Although Josephus claims to be discussing the Jews’ antiquity (*Ap.* 1.69–73, 93), his primary concern—and his first conclusion in *Ap.* 1.104—is using Manetho’s account of the Hycsos to prove that the Jews could not be Egyptian, although he does not state this openly and leaves this obvious inference to his readers.

Identifying the Hycsos with the Jews was so important to Josephus that he was willing to contradict himself and possibly even to manipulate the evidence. The account of the Hycsos’ invasion of Egypt (*Ap.* 1.75–76) contradicts Josephus’s claim shortly before that “our ancestors” were not given to military adventures (*Ap.* 1.62).⁸⁹ Moreover, attributing the foundation of Jerusalem to the Hycsos (*Ap.* 1.90) is inconsistent with *War* 6.438–439 which reports that a Canaanite chief called “Righteous Tongue” founded the city and that David, king of the Jews, captured it later.⁹⁰ Josephus may also have misrepresented the evidence from Manetho: fragments of Manetho from Julius Africanus and Eusebius preserved in Syncellus, from the Armenian version of Eusebius, and from a scholion to Plato report that the Hycsos were Phoenicians.⁹¹

89. As Barclay also notes (Barclay 2007 44 n. 249).

90. Cf. *Ant.* 1.179–180; 7.65–68. See also Barclay 2007 59 n. 327.

91. Fifteenth dynasty: Manetho F43 = *FGrH* 609 F2 = Syncellus p. 113 7ff. from Africanus. Seventeenth dynasty: Manetho F48a = *FGrH* 609 F2 = Syncellus p. 114 18ff. from Eusebius; Manetho F48b = *FGrH* 609 F3a = Euseb. (*Arm*) *Chron.* p.247 63, 15 Karst; Manetho F49 = *FGrH* 609 F7 = Schol. Plat. *Tim.* 21E. (Cf. Waddell’s edition of the fragments of Manetho in LCL 350.) Barclay concludes that Josephus deliberately omitted the identification of the Hycsos as Phoenicians (Barclay 2007 55 n. 312).

Josephus introduces the section on slanders (*Ap.* 1.219–2.244) by referring back to the proem and picking up its keywords, clarifying that the slanders concern the Jews’ origins, not their antiquity, and implying that the Jews were not originally Egyptians. One main point remains, Josephus notes: to show that the slanders (διαβολή) and abuse (λοιδορία) directed at “our γένος” are lies (ψευδής) and to use their authors as witnesses against themselves (καθ’ ἑαυτῶν . . . μάρτυσιν, *Ap.* 1.219).⁹² Josephus then subtly attributes noble origins to the Jews and aligns them with eminent nations (Athens and Sparta) in contrast with Egypt. Some writers, through malice (δυσμένεια), have tried to revile (λοιδορέω) the nobility of nations (εὐγένεια), the most renowned cities, and their constitutions (*Ap.* 1.220)—including Theopompus on the Athenians and Polycrates on the Spartans (*Ap.* 1.221).⁹³ In the Jews’ case, the Egyptians began the slanders (βλασφημία, *Ap.* 1.223).⁹⁴

The subject of the “slanders,” but not their contents now begins to come into focus: some people, desiring to gratify the Egyptians, do not admit the arrival of “our ancestors” into Egypt as it actually happened and give an untruthful account of their subsequent departure (*Ap.* 1.223). The Egyptians had many reasons for their hatred and envy, the original one being that “our ancestors” dominated their land and then returned to their homeland and prospered (*Ap.* 1.224). A second reason is that the opposition between the two nations—the Jews worship God while the the Egyptians worship irrational animals—created a great hatred in the Egyptians (*Ap.* 1.224). Josephus’s claim

92. διαβολή cf. βλασφημία, *Ap.* 1.2, βλασφημῶς, *Ap.* 1.4; λοιδορία cf. λοιδορέω, *Ap.* 1.3; ψευδής cf. ψευδολογία, *Ap.* 1.3, ψευδῶς γεγραφότες, *Ap.* 1.4; καθ’ ἑαυτῶν . . . μάρτυσιν cf. δι’ ἑαυτῶν ἐλεγχομένους, *Ap.* 1.4.

93. δυσμένεια cf. *Ap.* 1.2, 3; λοιδορέω cf. *Ap.* 1.3.

94. βλασφημία cf. *Ap.* 1.2, 4.

in *Ap.* 1.223 that the people in question do not provide a *truthful account* of the Jews' ancestors' entry into Egypt and subsequent departure implies that these people accept that the entry and departure took place—which grants that the Jews' ancestors were not Egyptian. *Apion* 1.224 clearly refers back to the claim that Manetho's shepherds were the Jews' ancestors (*Ap.* 1.103–104) and implies that they came from Judea, a crucial new detail, although Manetho reports that they came “from parts east” (*Ap.* 1.75). By highlighting the Egyptians' envy and hatred, and the two nations' differences over animal worship, Josephus underscores that the Jews and Egyptians are distinct—with the Jews occupying a higher position⁹⁵—and appeals to anti-Egyptian prejudice in his Roman audience.

The section on slanders considers four authors: Manetho (*Ap.* 1.227–287), Chaeremon (*Ap.* 1.288–303), Lysimachus (*Ap.* 1.304–320), and Apion (*Ap.* 2.2–144). In each case, Josephus refutes their account of the Jews' departure from Egypt and argues that the Jews were not Egyptians.⁹⁶

Josephus prefaces his discussion of Manetho by reminding his audience in an implicit reference to the shepherds that Manetho has already reported that “our ancestors” came into Egypt and ruled the country, were expelled, settled Judea, and built Jerusalem and the temple (*Ap.* 1.228).⁹⁷ Josephus then sets out the content of the

95. Implied by “envy.” See Berthelot 2000 216–217; Barclay 2004 119; Barclay 2007 130 n. 772.

96. The passage on Apion also addresses his attack on the Jews of Alexandria (*Ap.* 2.33–87) and his accusations about temple rites and Jewish practices (*Ap.* 2.79–142).

97. The claim that the shepherds built the temple appears here for the first time, as Barclay also notes (Barclay 2007 132 n. 793).

slanders: although Manetho’s account of “our ancestors” followed Egyptian chronicles, he subsequently gave himself authority to write myths and rumors about the Jews, wishing to mix them up (ἀναμίγνυμι) with a group of Egyptian lepers and other diseased people who had been condemned to exile (*Ap.* 1.229). The theme of “mixing” subtly refers to the claim that the Jews had their own first origin/nature (*Ap.* 1.1), and also echoes Josephus’s explanation for the silence of Greek authors on the Jews: the Jews’ way of life and homeland far from the coast meant that they never mixed (ἐπιμιξία) with the Greeks, who themselves mixed with the Egyptians (*Ap.* 1.60–61).⁹⁸ Josephus returns to Manetho’s account of “our ancestors”/the shepherds and to the theme of mixing twice more in his refutation of Manetho.⁹⁹

As he does with each author in this section except Apion, Josephus presents Manetho’s account and then refutes it. King Amenophis, who lived 518 years after the shepherds’ departure, wanted to see the gods and followed the advice of a diviner who proposed that he cleanse the land of lepers and other polluted people (*Ap.* 1.230–233). After collecting 80,000 maimed people and initially assigning them to the quarries, Amenophis allowed them to settle in the shepherds’ former city (*Ap.* 1.234–237). The maimed people chose Osarsiph, a priest of Heliopolis, to lead them and after enacting laws opposed to Egyptian customs—including permitting the killing and eating of sacred animals—he sent to the shepherds for help (*Ap.* 1.238–241). The shepherds invaded and ravaged Egypt before being driven out (*Ap.* 1.243–249). When he joined the shepherds, Osarsiph changed his name to Moses (*Ap.* 1.250).

98. ἐπιμιξία can refer to “commerce,” which fits the context of *Ap.* 1.60–61, but also to sexual intercourse.

99. *Ap.* 1.252–253, 278.

Before demonstrating that Manetho is speaking foolishly and lying (ψεύδω, *Ap.* 1.252),¹⁰⁰ Josephus comments that he will establish one point for the sake of his replies to other authors in this section: Manetho has granted that the Jewish γένος was not Egyptian by origin,¹⁰¹ but came to Egypt from outside, conquered it, and then left (*Ap.* 1.252). Josephus then promises to use Manetho's own words to prove that the Jews were not mixed up with maimed Egyptians and that Moses was not one of them, but lived much later (*Ap.* 1.253). In *Ap.* 1.252, Josephus finally arrives at the central issue of the “slanders:” the Jews were not Egyptian by origin. Josephus deliberately presents the answer, but not the allegation.

Josephus begins his reply by sneering at Egyptian religion (Amenophis did not need to see the gods—he had already seen the animals [*Ap.* 1.254]) and questioning details of the story (why did Amenophis not kill the lepers? [*Ap.* 1.257, 260]) before returning to the theme of Jewish origins. Stressing that the shepherds and the Egyptian lepers were distinct groups, *Ap.* 1.272 rhetorically asks what sort of friendship or intimacy they could have had; they were instead enemies with very different customs. Josephus concludes by reiterating that, according to Manetho, “our γένος” was not from Egypt and had not mixed with any Egyptians (*Ap.* 1.278).

As in *Antiquities*, Josephus then answers the charge that Moses was one of the lepers by arguing that Moses would never have enacted the Jewish laws concerning leprosy if he had been a leper himself (*Ap.* 1.281–285, cf. *Ant.* 3.265–268). To Manetho's charge that the Jews were a group of Egyptian lepers (*Ap.* 1. 229), Josephus can reply

100. ψεύδω cf. *Ap.* 1.3, 4.

101. Barclay (BJC) prefers “not in origin Egyptians by descent.”

that they were neither Egyptians nor lepers.

Josephus addresses the evidence of Chaeremon and Lysimachus by paraphrasing their accounts and then questioning their apparent linkage of Jews with Egyptians.

Chaeremon's story begins, like Manetho's, with a king Amenophis (*Ap.* 1.288). Disturbed by a bad dream, Amenophis followed the advice of a sacred scribe and expelled 250,000 infected people, led by the scribes Moses and Joseph (*Ap.* 1.289–290). At Pelusium, this group met 380,000 people whom Amenophis had barred from the country and the two groups attacked Egypt (*Ap.* 2.291). Amenophis's son later drove 200,000 Jews from Egypt to Syria (*Ap.* 1.292). After noting that both Chaeremon and Manetho have reported lies (ψευδολογία, ψευδής, *Ap.* 1.293),¹⁰² Josephus emphasizes the vagueness of (his paraphrase of) Chaeremon's account: Chaeremon fails to note whether the 380,000 people at Pelusium were Egyptians by γένος or foreigners (*Ap.* 1.298) and does not clarify whether the 200,000 Jews were part of the 250,000 lepers or the group of 380,000 (*Ap.* 1.302).

Lysimachus takes up the same fraudulent (ψεῦσμα) theme of the lepers and the maimed, but surpasses the others in the unlikely fictions which he devised out of great enmity (ἀπέχθεια, *Ap.* 1.304).¹⁰³ In the time of King Bocchoris, according to Lysimachus, “the people of the Jews” suffered from leprosy, scabies, and other diseases, and took refuge in the temples (*Ap.* 1.305). When many people fell ill and Egypt became unfruitful, Bocchoris followed the advice of an oracle by drowning those with leprosy

102. Cf. ψευδολογία, *Ap.* 1.3; ψευδῶς γεγραφότες, *Ap.* 1.4.

103. ψεῦσμα cf. *Ap.* 1.3, 4; ἀπέχθεια cf. δυσμένεια *Ap.* 1.2, 3.

and scabies, and sending the rest into the desert to die (*Ap.* 1.305–308). A certain Moses took charge and led the group through the desert, directing them to destroy temples along the way. They eventually arrived in Judea and built the city of Hierosyla,¹⁰⁴ which they later called Hierosolyma (*Ap.* 1.309–311). Josephus replies with a stream of rhetorical questions to differentiate between the Jews and Egyptians. Were “the people of the Jews,” natives or foreigners? If they were Egyptians, why call them Jews? If they were foreigners, where were they from (*Ap.* 1.314)? If they were Egyptians, they would never have abandoned their national customs so easily for those prescribed by Moses (*Ap.* 1.317). Josephus concludes that Lysimachus is a shameless liar (ψεύδομαι, *Ap.* 1.318, 320).¹⁰⁵

For the first and only time in the body of the work, Josephus mentions the accusation that the Jews were originally Egyptians in the section on Apion, and replies by accusing Apion of lying about his own Egyptian origins. Josephus introduces Apion’s evidence by reminding his audience that he has already given more than adequate proof that the Jews were not Egyptian by γένος and were not expelled on account of bodily injury or other misfortunes (*Ap.* 2.8).

According to Apion, Moses, a Heliopolitan, built open air prayer houses adorned with sundials (*Ap.* 2.10–11).¹⁰⁶ In the seventh Olympiad, Moses led the lepers, the blind, and the lame out of Egypt, a group amounting to 100,000 people (*Ap.* 2.15–20). After

104. “Temple plunder,” cf. Barclay 2007 162 n. 1044.

105. Cf. *Ap.* 1.3, 4.

106. The Greek is unclear and probably corrupt. See Thackeray 1926 296 nn. c–d and Barclay 2007 175 nn. 39–41.

marching for six days, the people developed swollen groin glands and rested on the seventh day when they arrived in Judea (*Ap.* 2.21).¹⁰⁷

Although Apion's story, in Josephus's paraphrase, does not identify the 100,000 people who accompanied Moses, Josephus begins by attacking Apion for falsely claiming (*ψεύδομαι*) that the Jews were Egyptian by *γένος* (*Ap.* 2.28). This lie is easily explained by Apion's lie (*ψεύδομαι*) that he is *not* Egyptian (*Ap.* 2.29). By falsely claiming (*καταψεύδομαι*) to be an Alexandrian rather than revealing that he was born in the oasis and is as Egyptian as anyone,¹⁰⁸ Apion admits the depravity of his *γένος* (*Ap.* 2.29). If he did not think that Egyptians were utterly worthless, he would not abuse (*λοιδορέω*) others by calling them Egyptian (*Ap.* 2.30). As a rule, Josephus observes, Egyptians either fake *συγγένεια* with the Jews to boost their own pride or they drag the Jews into association with their bad reputation (*Ap.* 2.31). Apion slanders (*βλασφημία*) the Jews to gratify the Alexandrians for granting him citizenship (*Ap.* 2.32). Thus, in attacking the Jews of Alexandria and Jews as a whole, Apion lies shamelessly (*ψεύδομαι*, *Ap.* 2.32).¹⁰⁹ Josephus's comment that Apion has falsely accused the Jews of being Egyptian by origin (*Ap.* 2.28) is the only time Josephus refers explicitly to this "slander" outside of the work's conclusion. Josephus's reply, attacking Apion for lying about his own Egyptian origins, shows that Josephus expected his Roman audience to view the charge of Egyptian origins as extremely damning.

107. Elsewhere, Apion reports that Moses ascended Mt Sinai for forty days and returned with laws (*Ap.* 2.25).

108. Lit: "the first Egyptian of all."

109. Keywords: *ψεύδομαι*, *Ap.* 2.28, 29 (twice), 32, cf. *Ap.* 1.3, 4; *λοιδορέω*, *Ap.* 2.30, 32, cf. *Ap.* 1.3; *βλασφημία*, *Ap.* 2.32, cf. *Ap.* 1.2, 4.

Josephus also subtly denies that the Jews' were originally Egyptian in the last section of *Apion* in his defense of Jewish law. After introducing the issue (*Ap.* 2.145–150) and commenting on Moses's antiquity (*Ap.* 2.151–156), Josephus remarks that Moses's first great deed was leading the Jews out of Egypt, when they had decided to leave Egypt behind and return to their ancestral land (*Ap.* 2.157), meaning Judea not Egypt.

Summary: Josephus's account of Jewish origins in *Against Apion*

Josephus's attack on Apion's assertion that the Jews had Egyptian origins demonstrates that Josephus must have considered accusations that the Jews were originally Egyptian very damaging. Josephus devotes more than half of *Apion* to addressing these charges, but only does so by defining the accusations very gradually and first developing a reply. Starting in the proem, Josephus emphasizes that the Jews had their own first origin (*Ap.* 1.1). The introduction to the section on antiquity establishes that the Jews were originally Chaldean and subtly implies that they were not Egyptian (*Ap.* 1.70–71). Josephus then uses Manetho, supposedly a witness to the Jews' antiquity (*Ap.* 1.93, 227; 2.1), to identify the Jews with the Hyksos (perhaps by manipulating the evidence) and uses this identification as his central argument throughout the rest of *Apion*. Progressively, Josephus bends Manetho's testimony to his needs by identifying the king-shepherds/captives as "our ancestors" (*Ap.* 1.91–92) who entered Egypt from outside and then settled Judea (*Ap.* 1.103–104), their original homeland (*Ap.* 1.224), which grants that the Jews were not Egyptians by origin (*Ap.* 1.252). Simultaneously, after referring only to "slanders" (*Ap.* 1.3–4, 59, 219), Josephus

slowly reveals that they are false accounts of “our ancestors” entry into Egypt and subsequent departure (spread by Egyptians [*Ap.* 1.223]) that mix up the Jews with a group of Egyptian lepers (*Ap.* 1.229), and amount to the (false) claim that the Jews were Egyptian by origin (*Ap.* 2.28). By the conclusion, in *Ap.* 2.289, Josephus can state the charge of Egyptian origins openly and claim to have refuted it, but only by virtue of his patient work and rhetorical skill throughout *Apion*.

Table 4: Outline of *Against Apion*

1.1-5	Proem
1.6-56	Historiography
1.6-27	Problems with Greek historiography
1.28-46	Care given to Jewish records
1.47-56	Josephus's own work
1.57-59	Restatement of goals
	(A) Reply to silence of Greek historians on Jews
	(B) Evidence for antiquity of Jews
	(C) Absurdity of calumnies of Jews
1.60-68	(A) Reasons for silence of Greek history on Jews
1.69-218	(B) Evidence for antiquity
1.69-72	Introduction
1.73-105	Egyptian evidence = Manetho
1.106-127	Phoenician evidence
1.106-111	Tyrian archives
1.112-115	Dius
1.116-126	Menander of Ephesus
1.127	Conclusion on Phoenician evidence
1.128-160	Chaldean evidence = Berossus
1.161-218	Greek evidence
1.161	Introduction
1.162-166	Pythagoras
1.167	Theophrastus
1.168-171	Herodotus
1.172-175	Choerilus
1.176-182	Aristotle via Clearchus
1.183-204	Hecataeus of Abdera
1.205-212	Agatharchides
1.213-215	Malicious silence of Hieronymus
1.216-218	Others
1.216-217	Theophilus, Euhemerus, Conon, Zopyrion
1.218	Demetrius Phalereus, elder Philo, Eupolemus
1.219-2.144	(C) Reply to slanders
1.219-226	Introduction
1.227-287	Manetho
1.227-251	Manetho's evidence
1.252-287	Josephus's reply
1.288-303	Chaeremon
1.288-292	Chaeremon's evidence
1.293-303	Josephus's reply
1.304-320	Lysimachus
1.304-311	Lysimachus' evidence
1.312-319	Josephus's reply
1.320	<i>Closing to Book I</i>
2.1	<i>Introduction to Book II</i>
2.2-145	Apion

2.2-2.9	Introduction: 3 types of charges (Ap 2.6-7) (1) Exodus (2) Attack on Jewish residents of Alexandria (3) Accusations against temple rites and Jewish code
2.10-32	Apion on exodus
2.10-27	Apion's evidence - Josephus replies
2.28-32	Josephus's closing reply
2.33-87	Apion on Jewish residents of Alexandria-Josephus replies
2.79-145	Apion on temple rites and Jw practices
2.79	Introduction
2.80-88	Ass's head in temple
2.89-111	Annual murder of a Greek
2.112-121	Theft of ass's head by Idumean
2.122-124	Jewish oath of hostility to Greeks
2.125-134	Jews subjugated by other empires
2.135-136	Jews have produced no sages/artists
2.137-142	Other: sacrifices, abstention from pork, circumcision
2.143-144	Conclusion: Apion's end
2.145-286	Jewish Law ("Reply to attacks on Moses and his code by Molon, Lysimachus, et al.")
2.145-150	Introduction
2.151-189	Remarks on Moses and the Law
2.190-219	Summary of the Law
2.220-235	Jewish devotion to the Law
2.236-286	Criticism of Greek laws, and comparison with Jewish laws
2.287-295	Closing Summary
2.287-290	Summary of arguments proved: Antiquity of the Jews (B) Jews not Egyptians, but migrated from elsewhere (C) Jews not expelled as diseased, but chose to return to their native land (C)
2.291-295	Encomium on Jewish Law
2.296	Dedication

Table 5: Keywords in *Against Apion*

Keyword	Uses in Apion	Used of Detractors (about origins)	Details
ψευδής, ψευδολογία, ψεύδομαι, ψευδῶς, ψεῦσμα	27	19	Apion 6x, Manetho 2 4x, Proem 2x (1x ref), Lysimachus 3x, Chaeremon & Manetho 1x, Molon & Lysimachus 1x, Apion & Molon 1x
ἐλέγχω, ἐξελέγχω	18	10	Proem 2x, Manetho & Chaeremon 2x, Manetho 2 2x, Apion 2x, accusers 2x
λοιδορέω, λοιδορία	17	8	Proem 1x, Introduction to section (C) 2x, Conclusion 1x, Apion 3x, Lysimachus 1x
βλασφημέω, βλασφημία, βλασφημῶς, <i>blasphemia</i>	13	7	Proem 2x, Apion 2x, Egyptians 1x, Manetho 1x, Posidonius and Molon 1x
δυσμένεια, δυσμενῶς	6	4	Proem 2x, Egyptians 1x, Molon & Lysimachus 1x

Chapter 6 - Hostility to Slaves and Freedmen in First Century CE

Rome

Introduction

The Jews' servitude in Egypt is central to the Genesis-Exodus account of the Jews' national origins and figures prominently in the rest of the Hebrew Bible and in pre-second century CE extra-biblical sources, as Chapter 2 demonstrates.¹¹⁰ Josephus's pledge in *Antiquities* to recount accurately the Jews' ancient history meant he had to consider how to portray the Jews' slavery in Egypt.¹¹¹ However, Josephus's audience of first-century Greco-Roman elites, who were ignorant of the Jews' own story of their servile national origins,¹¹² would probably have thought that chattel slaves had inherently defective characters, lacking both reason and the capacity for virtue. The status of slaves freed by a Roman citizen owner, who became Roman citizens upon manumission, was a highly sensitive and perhaps symbolic issue in the early empire, as Augustus's manumission reforms suggest, and later-first/early-second century CE sources are highly critical of powerful freedmen. The story of Romulus's asylum makes slaves part of Rome's own origins, and the differing accounts of Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus suggest that Roman elites may have held ambivalent views about Rome's own partly servile origins. All of these factors might have dissuaded Josephus from recounting the

110. See Chapter 2 page 41 ff.

111. The Jews' ἀρχαιολογία: *Ant.* 1.5, 13, 17, 26; 10.218; 20.26; ἀκρίβεια: *Ant.* 1.17; 9.208; 20.260, 263.

112. See Chapter 3 C page 148 ff.

Genesis-Exodus story of the Jews' servile origins to his primary, Roman audience.¹¹³

This chapter examines ideological and political biases against slaves and freedmen in first-century CE Rome and the very similar views of Josephus.

A. Hostility to Slaves and Freedmen in First Century CE Rome

(1) Aristotle and Natural Slavery of Individuals and Nations

Any discussion of ancient attitudes towards slavery must begin with Aristotle's theory of natural slavery in *Politics* book I, which applied to both individuals and nations. Aristotle's account was well-known among Roman intellectuals and part of mainstream thought¹¹⁴ and is the only extant, theoretical analysis of slavery from antiquity.¹¹⁵ Aristotle discusses slavery briefly and unsystematically in *Politics* I.4-7 to disprove the claim that the rule of a statesman, a king, a household manager, and a master are the same.¹¹⁶ Central to Aristotle's account of slavery is the idea of "nature" which he defines as "an end (ἡ δὲ φύσις τέλος ἐστίν),... whatever each thing is when its coming-into-being has been completed, we say that is the nature of each thing" (I.2 1252b32–33). The complete, human development of Aristotle's natural slave yields a person with a defective character.¹¹⁷

Aristotle presents the idea of natural slavery both by asserting that it is a

113. On Josephus's Roman audience, see Ch 1 page 31 ff.

114. Garnsey notes that Aristotle's views on natural slavery "entered mainstream philosophical discourse" (Garnsey 1996 128).

115. Finley 1998 185, 188; Pellegrin 2013 93.

116. *Pol.* I.1 1252a7–9; I.3 1253b14–22; I.5 1254b2–9; I.7 1255b16–22. Aristotle may have had Plato in mind (cf. *Pl. Plt.* 258e–261a; Reeve 1998 1 n. 2).

117. By contrast, a child's lack of virtue or reasoning reflects his incomplete development (I.13 1260a 9–14, 31–33).

necessary principle and by proof. To demonstrate the differences between types of rule, Aristotle examines the components of a polis and their natural development “from the beginning” (I.1 1252a 20–21, 24–25). Things that can not exist without each other necessarily form a couple (I.1 1252a 26–27) such as man and woman do for the sake of procreation; the natural ruler and the naturally ruled form a pair for the sake of survival (I.1 1252a 31–32). The ruled is the natural slave, as Aristotle explains: someone capable of “rational foresight” is a natural ruler and master, while someone who can use his body for labour is ruled and is a slave by nature (φύσει δοῦλος, I.2 1252a30–34; Reeve).

Aristotle claims to prove the existence of natural slaves by an argument from property and by analogy with other examples of naturally ruling and ruled. Property forms part of a household (I.4 1253b23) and a slave is a sort of animate property (I.4 1253b32).¹¹⁸ Property is also spoken of in the same way as a part, and a part is not only a part of another thing, but entirely belongs to that thing (I.4 1254a 8–10; Reeve). A slave thus belongs entirely to his master (I.4 1254a 12–13). This, Aristotle claims, clarifies the nature (φύσις) and capacity of a slave: anyone who by his nature belongs not to himself, but to another is a slave by nature (φύσει δοῦλος I.4 1254a13–15).

Aristotle returns to the ruler-ruled pair to demonstrate by analogy the existence of the natural slave. Ruling and being ruled are necessary and beneficial, and some things are distinguished from the hour of their birth for ruling and others for being ruled (I.5 1254a 21–24). Whenever several components are combined into one entity, a ruling and ruled element appear; these elements exist in living things “because this is how nature as a whole works” (I.5 1254a 28–33, Reeve). A living animal, for example, has both a soul,

118. Households emerge from the two natural couples (I.2 1252b 9–10) and eventually produce the polis (I.2 1252b 15–16, 27–28).

the natural ruling element (φύσις), and a body, the ruled element (I.5 1254a34–36). Similarly, it is natural (κατὰ φύσιν) and beneficial for the body to be ruled by the soul, and the reverse would be harmful (I.5 1254b6–9). The same thing is true for the rule of animals by humans (I.5 1254b10–13). When people differ from each other as do the soul and body, or a human and an animal, people whose proper work is to use their bodies are by nature slaves (φύσει δοῦλοι) and it is better for them to be ruled (I.5 1254b16–21). Aristotle concludes that some people are naturally free and others are naturally slaves, for whom slavery is beneficial and just (I.5 1255a1–2).

Aristotle also considers the argument that slavery is unjust and contrary to nature and, surprisingly, both concedes that some people are unjustly enslaved and concludes that the argument against natural slavery proves that natural slaves exist.¹¹⁹ Granting that slaves also exist by the law/convention (κατὰ νόμον) of war whereby the vanquished belong to the victors (I.6 1255a3–7), Aristotle notes that some claim it is unjust if anyone should be the slave of whoever has greater power and can subdue him by force (I.6 1255a7–11). Aristotle’s much discussed analysis of the issue in I.6 1255a 12–21 examines the virtue inherent in force and suggests that the dispute concerns whether the rule of the more powerful is just or whether justice is benevolence.¹²⁰ None of the arguments convince Aristotle that the one superior in virtue should not rule and be master (I.6 1255a19–21). Perhaps turning to a new set of dissenters, Aristotle notes that

119. Aristotle does not name his “opponents,” but Alcidamas, Philemon, Menander, and Anaxandrides all seem to have expressed this view. Alcidamas: see Arist. *Rhet.* I.13 1373b18–18a with Cope and Sandys 1877 I:247, and Grimaldi 1980 289–290. Philemon: *CAF* F95. Menander: Körte and Thierfelder F722. Anaxandrides: *CAF* F4.

120. Saunders comments that the passage is “written hazily,” and Schofield observes that scholars are unlikely ever to agree on Aristotle’s meaning (Saunders 1995 80; Schofield 1990 27 n. 3).

some assert that enslavement in war is just, but at the same time say that it is not (I.6 1255a21–24).¹²¹ A war might be unjust, and no one would ever claim that someone who did not deserve to be enslaved was a slave (I.6 1255a25–26). This grants, however, that some people are slaves by nature (I.6 1255a30–31), presumably because they deserve to be enslaved. Aristotle concludes that the objections have some merit and that it is *not always* true that one group are naturally slaves and the other natural free (I.6 1255b4–5). There are cases, however, where it is beneficial and just for one to be master and the other a slave, where one ought to rule, as is natural for him, and the other to be ruled (I.6 1255b4–9). The dispute thus proves the existence of natural slaves and that others are unjustly enslaved.

Three qualities emerge from Aristotle’s analysis of slavery in *Politics* I.5–7 as character traits of one who is *not* a slave by nature: reason, high birth, and virtue. When comparing the rule of the soul over the body to the rule of a master over a slave, Aristotle comments that a natural slave is able to perceive reason (λόγος), but does not possess it himself (I.5 1254b21–22). Even those who argue that slavery exists by convention would agree that the most well-born person (I.6 1255a27) does not deserve to be enslaved. Aristotle’s subsequent analysis thrice emphasizes that the (naturally) free are nobly-born (εὐγένεια, I.6 1255a33, 35, 40), and notes that they possess virtue (ἀρετή, I.6 1255a39). The natural slave, by contrast, is low-born (δυσγένεια) and morally bad (I.6 1255a39–40). Aristotle emphasizes these traits elsewhere in *Politics*. At the beginning of *Pol.* I.2, Aristotle notes that someone capable of “rational foresight” is a natural ruler and natural

121. Saunders notes that this section addresses a subset of the dissenters; Schofield comments that Aristotle is returning to the dispute about legal slavery (Saunders 1995 81–82; Schofield 1990 26).

master (I.2 1252a31–32). In *Pol.* I.13, Aristotle comments that a (natural) slave entirely lacks the deliberative faculty (I.13 1260a12–14).¹²² Aristotle also emphasizes the slave’s lack of virtue. A slave needs only a small amount of virtue to avoid doing his tasks from intemperance and cowardice (I.13 1260a34–36). Whatever virtue a slave possesses does not belong to him (I.13 1260a31–33). Instead, the cause of virtue in a slave is his master (I.13 1260b3–4).

Aristotle’s account defines a category of men who are slaves by nature and, consistent with this view, Aristotle thought entire nations could be composed exclusively of natural slaves who deserve to be ruled by others. Barbarians have no naturally ruling element, according to Aristotle, and their communities thus consist of male and female slaves (I.2 1252b5–7). This is why the poets say it is proper for Greeks to rule barbarians (I.2 1252b8 = Eur. *IA* 1400), meaning that a barbarian and a slave are by nature the same (I.2 1252b9). The critics of natural slavery hold the same view: they describe barbarians as slaves, but not the nobly-born who happen to be captured and enslaved in war (I.6 1255a24–29). Similarly, nobles consider themselves well-born wherever they are, but regard barbarians as noble only at home (I.6 1255a34–35)—implying that barbarians are not well-born and are natural slaves everywhere else.¹²³ In his discussion of kingship in *Pol.* III, Aristotle notes that barbarians submit to despotic rule because they are more servile by nature than Greeks (III.14 1285a19–22). Aristotle concludes that Greeks *should* enslave barbarians, in accordance with his citation from Euripides. Observing in *Pol.* VII that “the same things are best for both individuals and communities” (VII.14

122. There is no polis of slaves or animals because they lack “deliberate choice” (προαίρεσις, III.9 1260a32–34).

123. As Rosivach also comments (Rosivach 1999 148).

1333b37; Reeve), Aristotle comments that the one of the goals of training for war is to acquire despotic rule over those who deserve to be enslaved (VII.14 1333b38–1334a2). Although Aristotle might have meant the metaphorical “slavery” of political subjugation, scholars maintain that Aristotle has in mind chattel slavery and the conditions prevailing at Athens where many slaves were non-Greek.¹²⁴

Aristotle’s discussion appears to imply that natural servility is an unchanging quality that persists in nations and largely also in individuals. Natural slaves are marked out to be ruled from the hour of their birth (I.5 1254a21–24) presumably by their low birth and lack of virtue (I.6 1255a39–1255b1), which Aristotle evidently thinks they inherit from their parents, as Saunders comments.¹²⁵ However, Aristotle adds the caveat that while nature intends that good children come from good parents, it is not always able to bring this about (I.6 1255a40–1255b4).¹²⁶ On the other hand, if barbarians communities lack a ruling element (I.2 1252b5–7), barbarians must always be natural slaves.

Although several modern scholars dismiss Aristotle’s reasoning,¹²⁷ Aristotle’s account of natural slavery probably reflects the popular thinking and presuppositions of his time and place.¹²⁸ Rosivach views Aristotle’s account as a “philosophically more sophisticated” version of views commonly held by his peers among the slave-owning

124. Schofield 1990 21–22; Rosivach 1999 esp. 142–145, 152–154; Hunt 2011 37, 44.

125. Saunders 1995 81–82.

126. Aristotle doubted whether kings or their offspring are always noble or deserve to rule (Saunders 1995 82; cf. *Pol.* II.9 1271a18–26; III.15 1286b22–27).

127. “[A] battered shipwreck of a theory” (Garnsey 1996 107). See also Smith 1983; Brunt 1993 379. For a contrasting views, see Schofield 1990 21–22; Heath 2008 268.

128. Hunt 2011 41, 44.

elite.¹²⁹ Natural slavery theory may also have had the ideological function of justifying the social practice of slavery as practiced by the dominant class by appeal to supposed natural facts which demonstrate that slavery benefits both slave and master.¹³⁰ Romans, like Greeks, might have found in the idea of natural slavery a justification both for political conquest and for holding chattel slaves. Unsurprisingly, Aristotle's ideas on natural slavery seem to have influenced the views of Romans including Cicero in the late Republic and Bryson in the late first century CE.

(2) Natural Slavery in Roman Sources

According to the Pentateuch and post-biblical sources including Philo, the Israelites were enslaved as a group. Josephus's primary audience in first-century CE Rome probably believed, with Aristotle, that entire nations as well as individuals could be servile by nature. This section examines the evidence for the ideology of natural slavery in Roman sources; section (a) investigates evidence for the idea that entire nations could be natural slaves, and section (b) considers the substantial evidence that Romans believed individuals could be naturally servile.

(a) Natural Slavery of Nations

Roman authors seem to have followed Aristotle in positing that entire nations could be natural slaves, metaphorically and perhaps literally.

Like Aristotle, Cicero notes that what is true for individuals is also true for nations: no state is so stupid as not to prefer ruling unjustly to being justly enslaved (*servire iuste*, Cic. *Rep.* 3.28). Although the fragments of *De Republica*. 3.37 appear to

129. Rosivach 1999 152–153.

130. Pellegrin 1982 350.

describe individual chattel slaves,¹³¹ Augustine, who transmits several of these fragments, notes that Cicero lists the benefits of the natural rule of the best in *Rep.* 3 to demonstrate that slavery is useful for provincials:¹³² the conquered are better off than if they had not been conquered. Cicero himself expresses this view in *Philippics* 6 where he observes that it is contrary to divine law for the Roman people, whom the immortal gods want to rule over all nations, to be slaves; although other nations can endure slavery, the the Roman people's special characteristic is freedom (Cic. *Phil.* 6.19). Similarly, he comments in *Phil.* 10.20 that other nations can bear slavery, but "our *civitas*" can not. "Slavery" in this context refers political subjection, and this is what Cicero means in *Prov. cons.* 5.10 when he declares that that Syrians and Jews were "nations born to be slaves" (*nationibus natis servituti*): the gods intended Syrians and Jews to be ruled by Rome.¹³³ In impugning the character of Flaccus's Asian witnesses, Cicero subtly combines the ideas of natural (chattel) slavery and political subjection when he observes that no Greek ever wrote a comedy where the principal slave part was not played by a Lydian (Cic. *Flac.* 65).

Several scholars, including Ste. Croix, Brunt, Zetzel, and Isaac emphasize that *Rep.* 3.37 echoes and extends Aristotle's theory of natural slavery to the political realm and applies it to nations.¹³⁴ Cicero also appears to echo Aristotle's *Politics* I.2–3 in *Rep.* 1.38 when he has Scipio comment that he will not discuss origins, as learned men do, by describing the the male-female pair and the development of the household. Lactantius's

131. See the discussion of Cicero's views of natural slavery and individual slaves in section A2bi, page 245 f. below.

132. In *De civ. Dei* 19.21.2 which contains Cic. *Rep.* 3.37F1.

133. See also the discussion of *Prov. cons.* 5.10 in Chapter 2, page 148.

134. de Ste. Croix 1981 187; Brunt 1993 381; Zetzel 1999 xviii; Isaac 2004 183.

summary of the beginning of *Rep.* 3, from the early fourth century CE, reports that one character in the dialogue intended to rebut Plato and Aristotle (Lactant. *Div. inst.* 5.14.3–5).¹³⁵ However, Cicero may not have read Aristotle’s *Politics*. Zetzel comments that the reference in Lactantius is to Aristotle’s lost dialogue *On Justice*.¹³⁶ Moreover, Zetzel notes that Cicero “almost certainly” knew neither Aristotle’s *Politics* or *Nichomachean Ethics* directly.¹³⁷ Natural slavery theory, as mediated by Aristotle or otherwise, may simply have been part of Cicero’s world view and that of his intended audience.¹³⁸

Posidonius and Livy, writing in the first half and at the end of the first century BCE, respectively, both seem to echo Aristotle in positing that an entire nation can have a servile character.¹³⁹ Posidonius comments that many people who are unable to manage themselves on account of the weakness of their intelligence give themselves over to the service (ὕπηρεσία) of more intelligent people.¹⁴⁰ In this way, the Mariandyni made themselves subject (ὑποτάσσω) to the Herakleions, promising to serve them in exchange for their needs.¹⁴¹ As Swain comments, Posidonius comes very close to describing the Mariandyni as natural slaves.¹⁴² Livy ascribes similar views to eminent Romans in two

135. Lactantius, c. 250–c. 325; *Divine Institutes*, 303–310 CE (Bowen and Garnsey 2003 1–3).

136. Zetzel 1999 61 n. 12.

137. Zetzel 1995 3 n. 10. Zetzel also remarks that Cicero “probably” never read Aristotle’s *Politics*.

138. As Isaac suggests about *Prov. cons.* 5.10 specifically (Isaac 2004 225).

139. Posidonius (c. 135–c. 55 BCE) was an ambassador in Rome in 87/86 BCE and had contacts with both Cicero and Pompey, who visited him in Rhodes c. 55 BCE (Drury 1985 848). Livy began writing in 29 BCE and “published” book 121 of *Ab urbe condita* after 14 CE (Ogilvie 1982 458). Ogilvie’s estimate that Livy wrote 3 books per year dates books 35 and 36 to c. 16 BCE (*idem*).

140. *FGrH* 87 F8 = Ath. 6.84, 263C–D.

141. *Idem*.

142. Swain 2013 260.

composed speeches. Addressing the Achaean council in 192 BCE, the Roman consul Quinctius derides all Syrians as a nation of slaves (*mancipiorum...genus*) rather than of soldiers on account of their servile characters (*propter servilia ingenia*, Livy 35.49.8). Similarly, speaking in 191 BCE, Manlius Acilius reminds his troops that they are facing Syrians and Asiatic Greeks, the most vile nations among men and peoples born for slavery (*servituti nat[i]*, Livy 36.17.5).

Dio Chrysostom, who was active in Rome and probably enjoyed Flavian patronage,¹⁴³ echoes Aristotle's comments that barbarians, but not Greeks, are naturally servile. The narrator in *Oration 15* notes that no one would admit that a free/free-born Athenian was a slave even if he is captured in war and taken to Persia or "sold like a chattel" in Thrace or Sicily (15.16; Cohoon, LCL). By contrast, no one would say that a Thracian or Persian born of free parents or even a king was free if brought "here" (15.16).

Imperial era sources also specifically refer to slave nations. Strabo mentions the Aphamiotae, the Mariandyni, Mnoans, and Penestae. Both Strabo and Plutarch refer to the Helots, who were well-known in antiquity.¹⁴⁴

First-century Roman authors use "slavery" metaphorically to describe political subjugation and also subtly suggest that some peoples are servile by nature, perhaps blurring the distinction between metaphorical and chattel slavery. Tacitus has Monobazus, unsettled by incursions into Adiabene from Rome's new client-king

143. Drury 1985 869–870.

144. See Table 3, page 159.

Tigranes, complain that servitude to Rome (*servitium apud Romanos*) lies more lightly on a surrendered rather than a conquered nation (Tac. *Ann.* 15.1). *Agricola* repeatedly describes the condition of the Britons under Roman rule as servitude: Tacitus notes that Roman policy is to use local client-kings as tools of enslavement (*Agr.* 14.1), describes a colony Boudicca invades as “the local centre of servitude” (*Agr.* 16.1), and famously comments that the ignorant locals, having adopted Roman customs such as the toga, bathing, and the convivium, give the name culture to that part of their slavery (*Agr.* 21.3). In the well-known speech of Calgacus, Tacitus repeatedly characterizes rule by Rome as servitude, and has Calgacus comment that Britain’s servitude (*servitus*) is worse than the condition of people born as chattel slaves (*nata servituti*): a master feeds his slaves for free, but Britain must feed its own masters (*Agr.* 31.2). Tacitus also describes the Jews as slaves of many ancient empires; while the Assyrians, Medes, and Persians ruled the east, the Jews were the most despised part of those enslaved (*despectissima pars servientium*, *Hist.* 5.8.2).

Nations can also be naturally servile. In Caesar’s speech before the battle of Pharsalus, Appian, writing in the mid-second century CE and probably using earlier Roman sources, has Caesar declare that Pompey’s Syrian, Phrygian, and Lydian allies are slave captives (ἀνδράποδον), always ready to flee or serve as slaves (δουλεύω, App. *B. Civ.* 2.11.78).¹⁴⁵ After describing the heroic mass suicide of Volteius and the Opitergians, Lucan, a contemporary of Josephus, comments that cowardly nations will not understand how easy it is to escape servitude (*servitium*) by suicide and that men do not know that swords are given so that no one need be a slave, which may mean that

145. Appian c. 96– after 163 CE (Drury 1985 888–889).

cowardly nations are destined to be slaves (Luc. 4.575–580).¹⁴⁶ Tacitus suggests that a nation can have a servile spirit/mind inciting them to rebel: Civilis addresses the Treviri and the rest who have *servientium animae* (*Hist.* 4.32).

(b) Natural Slavery of Individuals

Roman sources contain substantial explicit and implicit evidence that Roman elites believed individuals could be slaves by nature. Sources such as Cicero, in the late Republic, and Bryson, in the late first century CE, describe natural slavery using the language and reasoning of Aristotle. Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Dio Chrysostom also speak of slaves by nature. A range of first century authors, including Tacitus and Columella and, perhaps surprisingly, the Stoics, seem to take for granted that chattel slaves have a defective, servile nature. The next two subsections examine explicit (i) and implicit (ii) evidence for the theory of natural slavery as applied to individuals in Roman sources.

(i) Explicit Evidence

Several surviving fragments of Cicero's *De re Publica* book 3 appear to echo Aristotle's argument that, by nature, slaves lack reason and the capacity to rule themselves and are better ruled by a master.¹⁴⁷ Nature, Cicero notes, has granted rule to everything that is best for the greatest benefit of the weak (*Cic. Rep.* 3.37F1).¹⁴⁸ Why else, he asks rhetorically, does god rule man, the mind (*animus*) rule the body, or reason rule lust and other defective/morally faulty parts of the mind (*Cic. Rep.* 3.37F1)?¹⁴⁹ It is

146. Lucan 39–65 CE (Drury 1982 872).

147. Zetzel dates *De re Publica* to 54–51 BCE (Zetzel 1995 1).

148. Taking the fragments as Keyes presents them in LCL 213. *Rep.* 3.37F1 = August. *C. Iul.* 4.12, 61; cf. August. *De civ. D.* 19.21.2.

149. *animus* can mean ἡ ψυχή or something like ὁ νοῦς. Keyes, Rudd, and Zetzel all

important to distinguish different kinds of rule and slavery (*Rep.* 3.37F2).¹⁵⁰ The mind rules over the body as a king rules over his subjects or as a father rules over his children, whereas it rules over lust as a master rules over his slaves (*Rep.* 3.37F2). Moreover, the master's rule over his slaves is like the rule of the best part of the mind, wisdom, over the mind's defective and weak parts. There is, however, a kind of unjust slavery (*iniusta servitus*) when those who could be "independent" belong to someone else (*Rep.* 3.37F4; Zetzel)¹⁵¹—which suggests that slavery is just for those who do not have the capacity to be independent.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus's account of the origins of Roman manumission practices in the regal period and his comparison of archaic and contemporary manumission suggests that he knew natural slavery theory.¹⁵² At the end of his account of Servius Tullius's organization of Roman affairs, Dionysius comments that Servius was the first king to admit manumitted slaves to Roman citizenship (*Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom.* 4.22.4). To convince the patricians who opposed this innovation, Servius argued that they were wrong to think that freemen differed from slaves by their nature (φύσις) instead of by fortune (4.23.1). Although he notes that Servius won over the patricians and that this policy remains one of Rome's sacred and unchanging customs, Dionysius goes on to criticize contemporary manumission practice. Whereas slaves in Servius's time obtained their freedom because of good character and conduct, contemporary freedmen often buy their freedom by thieving, housebreaking, prostitution, and murder,

render it as "mind."

150. *Rep.* 3.37F2 = August. *C. Iul.* 4.12, 61.

151. *Rep.* 3.37F4.

152. Dionysius reports that he came to Rome in 30/29 BCE (*Ant. Rom.* 1.7).

and have become an impure blot upon the city (4.24.4–5, 6–8). Dionysius does not clarify whether these contemporary freedmen might have unalterably corrupt natures.

The theory of natural slavery appears in first century CE Rome both explicitly in Bryson's *Management of the Estate* and Dio Chrysostom, and implicitly in the writings of Columella, Tacitus, and others. Bryson's *Management of the Estate*, written originally in Greek, is preserved in two fragments in the *Anthology* of Stobaeus, which dates from the early 5th century CE, and in an Arabic translation from around 900 CE.¹⁵³ Given Musonius Rufus's apparent borrowings from Bryson,¹⁵⁴ Swain concludes that Musonius probably heard Bryson at Rome and dates Bryson to the 60's CE.¹⁵⁵ Swain also comments that *Management of the Estate*, which he notes aims to be a practical guide, reflects the social and economic values of a member of the elite.¹⁵⁶

Stobaeus introduces at *Flor.* 4.28.15 a passage Ἐκ τοῦ Βρύσωνος Οἰκονομικοῦ, half of which provides a typology of slaves (4.28.15.15–25). In contrast to Aristotle, who comments that slaves are spoken of in two ways (*Pol.* I.6 1255a4), Bryson begins by noting that slaves are named in three ways (4.28.15.15). One sort is a slave by law/convention (κατὰ νόμον). Another sort is a slave by the manner of his soul (4.28.15.16–17): he is not naturally a slave nor a slave by nature (φύσει δοῦλος), but a slave of his passions and of excessive consumption, and is morally worse than a slave by nature (4.28.15.18–20). The slave by nature (κατὰ φύσιν...δοῦλος)—Bryson's third type—is

153. *OCD4* s.v Stobaeus; Swain 2013 109.

154. Swain 2013 115–120.

155. Swain 2013 34.

156. Swain 2013 32, 34–35, 37.

able independently to provide service to his masters by means of his body for traveling the road, carrying burdens, and submitting to distress and ministrations, but not able to possess either virtue or vice of the soul (4.28.15.21–25).

The Arabic translation of Bryson is not literal, but aims to be a “fair and intelligent version of the Greek” in idiomatic Arabic.¹⁵⁷ Bryson Arabus notes that there are three sorts of slaves (Bry. 56). The slave “by (the institution of) servitude” is a person “on whom the law has imposed slavery.”¹⁵⁸ The next sort is a slave “by appetite” who is ruled by “appetites and feelings.” The third type of slave is the “slave by nature” who “has a strong body and endures toil, but can not discern between good and evil (Bry. 57).” Bryson Arabus next, probably following part of the Greek original omitted in Stobaeus,¹⁵⁹ observes that the slave by nature possesses “no sign of intelligence” apart from being “obedient” and “able to manage himself” (Bry. 57). He is “close to the beasts,” and is a slave even if he happens to be free; “the best thing for him” is to be managed by a master (Bry. 57).

Although Bryson Arabus 55–57 appears to divide slaves into three disjoint categories, the subsequent discussion suggests they overlap. Bryson recommends avoiding a slave who is both a slave “by (the institution) of slavery” (type 1) and “by appetite” (type 2) because a master can not control a person who can not control himself (Bry. 58). In addition to slaves by nature, some slaves are “free in nature,” although Bryson does not specify whether they fall into types 1 or 2. A slave with a free nature, a strong spirit, and a strong body is suited for managing the estate; a slave with a free

157. Swain 2013 32, 112.

158. All translations of Bryson Arabus are from Swain 2013.

159. Swain 2013 112.

nature a “gentle and docile” mind and “a pure body” is suited for “serving and ministering” (Bry. 60). By contrast, a slave by nature is suited for labor (Bry. 60).

Bryson’s parallels with Aristotle’s account of natural slavery are striking. Two of Bryson’s three ways of describing slaves match Aristotle’s two ways:¹⁶⁰ there are slaves by law/convention¹⁶¹ and slaves by nature.¹⁶² As in Aristotle, a slave possesses no virtue¹⁶³ and no intelligence¹⁶⁴ except as required to perceive it or be obedient.¹⁶⁵ A natural slave can not manage himself,¹⁶⁶ thus it is best for him to have a master.¹⁶⁷

Bryson’s comments on slavery demonstrate that at least one literate member of the elite in first century CE Rome held views of natural slavery very similar to Aristotle’s. Swain argues that both Musonius Rufus and Dio Chrysostom—contemporaries of Josephus who were active in first century Rome—read Bryson,¹⁶⁸ which suggests that Bryson’s views reached contemporary audience in Rome. Dio Chrysostom’s fifteenth oration implies that most people believed in natural slavery.¹⁶⁹

160. Stob. *Flor.* 4.28.15.15, Bry. 56; cf. *Pol.* I.6 1255a4.

161. κατὰ νόμον, Stob. *Flor.* 4.28.15.16, Bry. 56; cf. *Pol.* I.6 1255a5.

162. κατὰ φύσιν, Stob. *Flor.* 4.28.15.20, Bry. 57; cf. *Pol.* I.2 1252a33–34, I.4 1254a15, I.5 1254b19–21.

163. Stob. *Flor.* 4.28.15.24–25; cf. *Pol.* I.6 1255a39, I.13 1260a31–36, 1260b1–4.

164. Bry. 57; cf. *Pol.* I.2 1252a31–32, I.13 1260a12–14, III.9 1260a33–34.

165. Bry. 57; *Pol.* I.5 1254b22–23.

166. Bry. 57; cf. *Pol.* I.5 1254a21–24: marked out from moment of birth to be ruled.

167. Bry. 57; cf. better to be ruled: *Pol.* I.5 1254b19–20, beneficial/just to be a slave: *Pol.* I.2 1252a34, I.5 1255a1–2, 1254a21–22, 1255a2, I.6 1255b6–7.

168. Musonius (c. 25– c. 100 CE) was a Roman equestrian (Trapp 2007 23). Dio Chrysostom (45/50 – after 100 CE) studied in Rome under Musonius, was exiled by Domitian, and then returned in the reign of Nerva (Trapp 2007 24). Swain demonstrates that both Musonius and Dio read Bryson (Swain 2013 115–119; 122–123).

169. See the discussion on page 256 f.

(ii) Implicit Evidence

Roman authors frequently refer to a servile nature (*ingenium*) or the equivalent in ways that imply that some people are slaves by nature. Sallust comments that nothing was sacred and no acts heinous to the barbarian wrath and servile natures (*servile ingenium*) of Spartacus's band of slaves (Sall. *Hist.* 3 F44).¹⁷⁰ Columella, writing in the first century CE, emphasizes the importance of choosing a suitable sort of slave as overseer of an estate and comments that he should have certain sensibilities as far as his servile nature allows (*servile...ingenium*, Columella *Rust.* 1.8.10).¹⁷¹ Tacitus repeatedly attributes the actions of slaves or ex-slaves to their servile nature. Reporting the speech Gaius Cassius made to the Senate after the murder of Pedanius Secundus by his slaves, Tacitus has Cassius observe that their ancestors were always suspicious of the servile natures or "instincts" (*ingenia servorum*) of slaves even when they were born in the master's house and liked their master (Tac. *Ann.* 14.44; Woodman). Tiberius, eager to gauge his troops' morale, comments that tribunes, centurions, and friends often bring welcome news, but that the natures or "instincts" of freedmen are servile (*servilia ingenia*, Tac. *Ann.* 2.12). Disparaging the freedman Felix, whom Claudius appointed to administer Judea, Tacitus notes that he combined the rule of a king with the character of a slave (*servile ingenium*, Tac. *Hist.* 5.9). *Ingenium* can refer both to a person's nature/character and to his cunning: when Vitellius gave returning exiles the rights of patronage over their freedmen, the latter used their servile *ingenium* to safeguard their funds (Tac. *Hist.* 2.92). Slaves, both real and metaphorical, can also have a servile *animus*. Scaevinus's freedman Milichus betrayed the Pisonian conspiracy to Nero because his

170. Sallust, 86–35/34 BCE (Drury 1982 838–839).

171. Columella wrote before 65 CE (Drury 1982 901).

servile *animus* preferred treason and wealth to concern for his patron and his own liberty (Tac. *Ann.* 15.54). Speaking to persuade Alpinus Montanus to join his revolt, Civilis addresses “You Treviri and others with servile sensibilities” (*servientium animae*, Tac. *Hist.* 4.32). Valerius Maximus, who wrote under Tiberius, cites a slave’s joyous look of vengeance while under torture for having murdered Hasdrubal as an admirable example of fortitude demonstrated by a servile *animus* (Val. Max. 3.3 ext. 7).¹⁷²

Tacitus’s observations on child-rearing among the Germans suggest that the distinction between slave and free is a matter of nature not nurture. Tacitus emphasizes that the children in every house grow up naked and filthy (Tac. *Germ.* 20.1). Each is suckled by their own mother, not by slaves or wet-nurses. No luxuries distinguish the upbringing of master and slave, but they spend time with the same cattle and the same soil. In time, age separates the freeborn (*ingenuus*) and virtue claims them. Although the children might literally have imbibed their nature with their mothers’ milk, Tacitus’s emphasis that children in *every* house are reared in the same way suggests that he thought the difference between slave and free was innate.

A slave might also have a particular servile “look,” which could even be modeled in stone. In his listing of notable sculptures, Pliny includes “Boy” by Lyciscus, a work which captured the cunning and treacherous look of a household slave (Plin. *HN* 34.79). According to Suetonius, Augustus made the rules of manumission more stringent to keep the Roman people pure and uncorrupted from an impure mixture of foreign and servile blood (Suet. *Aug.* 40.3), which suggests that slaves’ very essence was contaminated with servility.

172. Mueller 2002 2.

Whether in peace or wartime, in the city or country, slaves possessed certain characteristic negative traits, according to first century CE Roman authors. Slaves were untrustworthy. Tacitus notes that the Batavi and their allies besieged Vetera because the camp had few provisions and was filled with non-combatants; they thereby counted on the treachery that might result from scarcity, on the transient trustworthiness of slaves, and the fortunes of war (Tac. *Hist.* 4.23). Columella warns estate owners that slaves do not keep honest accounts (Columella, *Rust.* 1.7.7) and similarly notes that beekeeping can not be entrusted to slaves because it requires maximal trustworthiness (Columella, *Rust.* 9.5.2). Roman sources portray slaves as deceitful, greedy, and thieving. Without oversight, a master could expect his slaves to reduce the amount of grain threshed via fraud (Columella, *Rust.* 1.7.6). Even a slave overseer could be expected fraudulently to make off with the sheep's fodder (Columella, *Rust.* 7.4.2). Greed was one of the two slave traits that made estate management difficult (Columella, *Rust.* 1.7.5); instead of farming, slaves were intent on theft (Columella, *Rust.* 1.1.20). Pliny comments that food and drink has to be protected by rings, but even this is insufficient because slaves often take a ring off of their master's finger when he is asleep (Plin. *HN* 33.26-27). Sallust observes that, although some of Spartacus's band were willing to obey him, most sought nothing beyond plunder (Sall. *Hist.* 3 F44). Slaves were also wicked. Left to their own devices, slaves were likely to damage an estate (Columella, *Rust.* 1.6.6). To prevent this, an estate's overseer should inspect the slaves' clothing to avoid any chance of wrongdoing (Columella, *Rust.* 11.1.21) and keep slaves occupied with work to ensure that they concern themselves with food and rest rather than wickedness (Columella, *Rust.* 11.1.27). Commenting on the murder of Larcus Macedo, Pliny observes that it is the slaves' wickedness not their ability to reason that leads them to kill their masters (Plin.

Ep. 3.14.5). Slaves were also known for being lazy. A *villica* must always seek out slaves who have stayed behind in the villa and not gone out to work because of sloth (Columella, *Rust.* 12.3.7). City slaves are no better: the lazy, slothful type of slave used to idling, the circus, the theatre, gambling, and whore houses never ceases to dream about them (Columella, *Rust.* 1.8.1–2). A slave’s laziness can cause filthy conditions in an apiary (Columella, *Rust.* 9.5.2). Perhaps this reputation for filth explains Pliny’s comment that certain diseases attack particular kinds of trees, just as some diseases infect slaves as a group (Plin. *HN* 17.218–219).¹⁷³

Some scholars assume that first-century Romans believed that no one was a slave by nature and that this was due to the popular influence of the Stoics.¹⁷⁴ Griffin, for example, argues that Seneca’s central philosophical tenet was that there are no natural slaves and that the idea of natural slavery had become a cliché.¹⁷⁵ Yet, although the evidence of Cicero, Bryson, and others just cited disproves this notion, the Stoics often presuppose Aristotelian views of the defective natures of actual, chattel slaves themselves, despite creating striking seeming-paradoxes by literal and metaphorical use of terms like “slavery” and “freedom.”

Seneca, who wrote between 37 and 65 CE,¹⁷⁶ cautions that an “upright, good, and great” soul may end up in the body of an equestrian, freedman, or slave (*Ep.* 31.11; Gummere, LCL), which, as Garnsey notes, suggests that particular individuals could be

173. Pliny notes that such diseases can also infect the plebs.

174. As Garnsey comments (Garnsey 1996 128).

175. Griffin 1976 257, cf. 256–285.

176. On the dating of Seneca’s works, see Griffin 1976 395–411.

unjustly enslaved.¹⁷⁷ A corollary of this view is that some, perhaps most, people are justly enslaved. Thus, when Seneca admonishes Lucilius to remember that the person whom he calls a slave was born from the same stock and lives on equal terms with him (*Ep.* 47.10), it is both a conceit—because chattel slaves did not live on equal terms with free Romans—and a reminder not to gloat, not an argument against natural slavery. Instead, Seneca conceives of Lucilius’s slaves as his inferiors (*Ep.* 47.11). Seneca also thought that most slaves lack virtue: examples of slaves displaying virtue by giving their lives for their master or refusing to incriminate them under torture are notable precisely because they are rare (*Sen. Ben.* 3.19). Seneca may have believed that it was natural for some men to be slaves; echoing both Aristotle and Cicero, he observes in *Ep.* 90.4 that nature’s habit is to subject the weaker to the stronger.

Epictetus, who was born a slave and was active in Rome during the Flavian period until his expulsion by Domitian, expounded a view of natural slavery and natural freedom that echoed the terminology of Aristotle, but addressed metaphorical not chattel slavery.¹⁷⁸ Whenever a person is controlled by externals, he is a “slave” (*Arr. Epict. Diss.* 4.2.25, cf. 2.2.12–13). To desire, admire, or try to acquire or control anything which is not one’s own, such as a cup, land, a horse, one’s wife and children (4.1.112), or even one’s health (4.1.76) is to give oneself over to slavery (4.1.77) because things outside ourselves are naturally servile (φύει δοῦλος; *Arr. Epict. Ench.* 1.1–3). By contrast, “freedom” consists in controlling one’s reactions to externals by fixing one’s aim only on things that are under one’s control such as judgement, reasoned choice and irrational

177. Garnsey 1996 145 n. 29.

178. Millar dates Epictetus’s expulsion to 92/92 CE (Millar 1965 141–142.); Seddon suggests 89 CE (Seddon 2005 5).

impulse, and desire, which are all naturally free (Arr. *Epict. Ench.* 1.1–2). Although Epictetus discusses natural “slavery” and “freedom,” he clarifies that he is not talking about chattel slavery: when a (Roman) master frees his slave before a praetor and pays the five percent manumission tax, he has not “freed” the slave (Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 2.1.26–27).

Epictetus also seems to have shared the common view that actual, chattel slaves had defective characters. Using one’s judgement means assigning to each thing its true value, such as recognizing that a slave is more useful than a dog, but less useful than a fellow-citizen (Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 2.23.24). Wishing that one’s slave boy should never make mistakes means wanting badness not to be badness (Arr. *Epict. Ench.* 14.1). Runaway slaves are cowardly, ignoble/low-born, and usually also steal from their masters (Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 3.26.1). Slaves are also inept and lazy: when one asks for warm water, one can expect the slave not to listen, to bring tepid water, or to absent himself from the house (1.13.2).

Epictetus may have thought that some slaves were servile by nature. Both animals (Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 3.1.3–4) and humans (3.1.23–28) as collectives have a particular nature. When a man fulfills his principal duties, including marrying, having children and holding public office, he is behaving in accordance with his nature by acting as a free, noble, and modest man (3.7.25–27). Because chattel slaves could neither hold public office nor marry, Epictetus appears to imply that chattel slaves are ill-born. Elsewhere, Epictetus explicitly suggests, echoing the terminology of Aristotle, that slaves are ill-born: Epictetus encourages his readers either to be free men, and thus educated and noble, or to be slaves, and thus uneducated/boorish and ignoble/low-born (2.2.13). Given Epictetus’s negative views of slaves, he may have thought that it was

natural for some men to be masters and others to be chattel slaves: Epictetus admonishes his readers to remember that it is a law of nature (νόμος...φυσικός) “for the superior to have the better of the inferior” (3.17.6; Oldfather, LCL).

Epictetus’s influence extended to Roman elites and beyond. Epictetus survives in the writings of Arrian, adlected to the senate by Hadrian and later a suffect consul, who studied with Epictetus in Nicopolis around 108 CE.¹⁷⁹ Later evidence suggests that Epictetus’s influence was widespread. Aulus Gellius reports, perhaps ironically, that one could expect to run into an eminent Stoic philosopher with a travel-sized copy of Epictetus in his baggage.¹⁸⁰

Dio Chrysostom largely ignores chattel slavery, but argues that many free men are unjustly enslaved, in contrast to others who are probably justly enslaved, and explicitly notes that belief in natural, chattel slavery was common. *Oration 15* considers whether one can know who is a “slave” and who is “free” (*Or.* 15.2), but Dio clarifies that he is not investigating chattel slavery: when an interlocutor suggests that someone could become free by raising money and paying their master, the narratorial voice replies “that is not the method [of becoming free] I mean” (15.22; Cohoon, LCL). Subsequently, echoing Aristotle, the narrator emphasizes that not all who are in chattel servitude are “slaves,” because many are free men who are unjustly enslaved (15.13) and cites several examples from Greek literature including Eumaeus (*Od.* 15.413 ff.), and free Athenians captured in Sicily and forced to serve as slaves (15.14–15). This implies that others are justly enslaved, perhaps because they are naturally slaves. Although the narrator rejects

179. Millar 1965 142, 148; Seddon 2005 5; Syme 1982 183.

180. Gell. *NA* 19.1, 14. Drury dates *NA* to after c. 165 CE; Kuelen suggests c. 180 CE (Drury 1982 906; Kuelen 2009 198).

the term “slave” (15.28) he speculates that the term was originally applied to men who were ἀνελεύθερος καὶ δουλοπρεπής, presumably meaning having an unfree and servile character or nature (15.29).¹⁸¹ The narrator considers his interlocutor’s view that anyone noble and well-born must be free, but that an ill-born person is by necessity a slave (15.31) before rejecting this view and concluding that the mass of ignorant men misuse the terms “free” and “slave” (15.32). The narrator thus implies that most people subscribed to Aristotle’s theory of natural slavery.

(3) Ambivalence about Rome’s Ancient Servile Origins

Accounts of Romulus’s asylum, which appear in the early imperial era writings of Livy and of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, suggest a deep ambivalence about whether Rome was founded in part by slaves.¹⁸² After the death of Remus, according to Livy, Romulus expanded the city walls and decided to increase the city’s population by gathering “an obscure and lowly multitude” and pretending that they were autochthonous inhabitants (Livy 1.8.4–5; Foster, LCL). To this end, he established an asylum between two groves on the Palatine and welcomed from the surrounding peoples a throng eager for new things, making no distinction between free *or slave* (1.8.6). By contrast, Dionysius reports that Romulus increased the population by welcoming people from badly governed cities in Italy without regard to their fortunes, provided only that they were *free* (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.15.3).¹⁸³ According to Dionysius, Romulus built a

181. Cohoon prefers “lack[ing] a free man’s spirit and...[having] a servile nature” (LCL).

182. Cicero reports that Romulus gathered together shepherds and refugees (Cic. *Or.* 1.37), or refers to Romulus’s followers as “crap” (*faex*, Cic. *Att.* 2.1.8.5), but does not mention the asylum. As noted below, Fabius Pictor, following Diocles of Peparethus, relates that Romulus welcomed slaves into his band after rescuing Amulius’s cattle (Plut. *Rom.* 7.1 = *FRHist* 1 F4b).

183. Dionysius reports that Romulus also increased the population by requiring the

temple between the two groves and made it an asylum for suppliants (*Ant. Rom.* 2.15.4). Dionysius also explicitly rejects claims that Rome was founded by slaves in the proem to *Roman Antiquities*. To forestall critics who will complain that he has chosen to write about Rome's humble beginnings, Dionysius comments that almost all Greeks are ignorant of Rome's early history and have heard false reports that it was founded by vagabonds and barbarians—"and even those not free men" (*Ant. Rom.* 1.4.2; Cary, LCL).¹⁸⁴

Other references to Romulus's asylum display a similar ambivalence. Strabo and Ovid, both contemporaries of Livy and Dionysius,¹⁸⁵ describe how Romulus gathered "a promiscuous rabble" to whom he granted citizenship (Strabo 5.3.2; Jones, LCL) or an unenviable mob (*Ov. Fast.* 3.430). Velleius's epitome of Roman history, completed in 30 CE,¹⁸⁶ notes only that Romulus opened an asylum (*Vell. Pat.* 1.8.5). Writing in the early second century CE,¹⁸⁷ Juvenal warns those Romans who ostentatiously trace their ancestry back to the city's foundations that they derive their stock from "an infamous asylum" and that their first ancestor was either a herdsman "or something I'd rather not

inhabitants to rear all male and all first-born, female children (*Ant. Rom.* 2.15.2), and by not killing or enslaving the inhabitants of captured cities (*Ant. Rom.* 2.16.1).

184. Whitmarsh has recently argued that Dionysius has in mind anti-Roman historians, perhaps primarily Metrodorus of Scepsis, who attacked Rome for having servile origins (Whitmarsh 2016; cf. Metrodorus of Scepsis, *FGrH* 184).

Oddly, Livy and Dionysius take contrary positions on the servile origins of Servius Tullius, Rome's sixth king. Livy, who includes slaves in Romulus's asylum, denies that Servius was the son of a slave-woman, but Dionysius, who omits slaves from the asylum, contends that Servius was a slave (Livy 1.39; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.1.3, 4.6.6). Florus reports that Servius's mother was a slave (*Flor.* 1.1.6).

185. Ovid 43 BCE–17 CE (Drury 1982 855). For Strabo's dates, see page 128 n. 77.

186. Drury 1982 890.

187. Drury dates *Sat.* 1 to after 100 CE and *Sat.* 15 to after 127 CE (Drury 1982 882).

mention” (Juv. 8.272–275; author, Braund, LCL). Florus, writing after 140 CE¹⁸⁸ and whom Syme labels a “condensed Livy,” breaks with Livy’s account of the asylum and relates that Latin and Tuscan shepherds, and Phrygians and Arcadians flocked to Romulus’s asylum (Flor. 1.1.9).¹⁸⁹ By contrast, Plutarch, who spent time in Rome in the 90s CE and became a Roman citizen,¹⁹⁰ reports that Romulus’s asylum added more slaves to the ones who were already with him, according to the account of Diocles of Peparethus followed by Fabius Pictor (Plut. *Rom.* 3.1). After having driven off the rustlers of Amulius’s cattle, Romulus and Remus gathered many needy people and slaves (δοῦλος) into their band (Plut. *Rom.* 7.1) and subsequently had to depart Alba to found a new city because their group contained slaves (οικέτης) and runaways (ἀποστάτης; Plut. *Rom.* 9.2).¹⁹¹ Subsequently, when he had founded his city, Romulus established a refuge and received all comers, including slaves (δοῦλος), debtors, and murderers (Plut. *Rom.* 9.3).¹⁹² In his comparison of Romulus with Theseus, Plutarch adds that Romulus and Remus were themselves said to be slaves (δοῦλος) and the children of swineherds (Plut. *Comp. Thes. Rom.* 4.1).

This evidence suggests that Rome’s alleged founding by an indiscriminate collection of slaves and other miscreants was a taint that continued to stain contemporary Romans many centuries later. Juvenal’s allusion to the originally lowly origins of unnamed Roman elites only works as satire if at least some Romans found such ancient origins shameful. These views are consistent with Aristotle: nations and individuals can

188. Drury 1982 898.

189. On Florus’s dates, see Forster 1929 vii–viii and Syme 1958 II:503.

190. Drury 1985 868.

191. An ἀποστάτης can also be a runaway slave, cf. LSJ s.v. ἀποστάτης II.

192. On Plutarch and Dionysius’s use of Fabius Pictor, see *FRHist* III:15–21.

be naturally servile and have defective characters that persist. Dench argues that Livy and Dionysius's accounts of Romulus's asylum reflect concerns about contemporary Rome. She comments that Livy is ambivalent about Rome's "indiscriminate beginnings" and questions the distance between archaic and contemporary Rome.¹⁹³ Dionysius wants to omit from the story of Roman origins "objectionable features of contemporary Roman society."¹⁹⁴ This sort of ambivalence about servile national origins in the distant past and its contemporary relevance might have influenced Josephus.

(4) Status Distinctions Among Ex-Slaves in Augustan Rome

Slaves and freedmen were a very visible presence in Rome: half of the members of a elite Roman household were probably slaves and a quarter to a third were freedmen, according to limited data.¹⁹⁵ Slaves were legally non-persons and Roman society was sensitive to the precise status of freedmen, who were tainted by their servile origins even though they became Roman citizens upon manumission. This section examines the status of slaves and freedmen in Roman society and explores the heightened sensitivity to the status of freedmen in the early Empire as evidenced by Augustus's manumission reforms.

Philo, Paul, and, much later, the *Institutes* of Justinian comment that all men are either slave or free.¹⁹⁶ A slave, in Roman law, was property and the only human that could be owned.¹⁹⁷ As chattel, a slave was categorized with important agricultural

193. Dench 2005 20, 20 n. 52.

194. Dench 2005 20.

195. Mouritsen 2011 139. The figures are based solely on evidence from the *columbaria* of two Roman households.

196. Philo *Leg* 2.97; Gal 3.28; Justinian *Inst* 1.3.pr.

197. Buckland 1908 3, 10.

property like land, buildings, and animals;¹⁹⁸ a slave could be bought, sold, or left as a legacy.¹⁹⁹ As a person, a slave was “a nullity” at civil and praetorian law,²⁰⁰ and could not own property, marry, or have successors in death.²⁰¹ In the Republic, a slave formally manumitted by a Roman citizen became a Roman citizen.²⁰² This was unusual in antiquity because a slave manumitted in Athens, for example, became merely a resident alien,²⁰³ and because, although only the highest public bodies in classical Greece could confer citizenship, a Roman master could do so acting as an individual.²⁰⁴ Manumission in Rome was common and, according to Mouritsen, more widespread than in any other slave society for which there is evidence.²⁰⁵ Neither the number nor proportion of freedmen in Rome is certain, but freedmen are highly visible in funerary inscriptions where they comprise perhaps three-quarters of inscriptions in which the status of the person is clear.²⁰⁶ Dionysius of Halicarnassus compared Roman manumission practice favorably to the Greek habit of rarely granting citizenship and noted that the extension of Roman citizenship to freed slaves helped Rome become the greatest nation (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.9.4, 2.17.1).

198. Watson 1987 47.

199. Watson 1987 48, 53.

200. Buckland 1908 73, 434.

201. Buckland 1908 434; Watson 1987 77–78; Bradley 1994 27.

202. Buckland 1908 439–444. The three formal methods of manumission were *vindicta*, *censu*, and *testamento*.

203. Duff 1958 12; Mouritsen 2011 67.

204. Mouritsen 2011 69.

205. Mouritsen 2011 141.

206. Hopkins 1978 115. The evidentiary value of the funerary inscriptions of Roman freedman is much debated; cf. Duff 1958 197 199–200; Treggiari 1969 32–34; Hopkins 1978 115–116; Mouritsen 2011 123–129.

Although a Roman slave became a citizen upon manumission, he suffered from two ongoing disabilities: patron-client obligations towards his former master²⁰⁷ and the enduring taint of servile origins, which limited his status. Freedmen could neither serve in the legions, urban cohorts, or praetorian guard, nor become equestrians or members of the Senate.²⁰⁸ A freedman could not be a magistrate or hold a Roman priesthood, or serve as a magistrate in a Roman colony or in a town council.²⁰⁹ Freedmen were also confined to urban tribes, probably to limit their voting power.²¹⁰ In Roman law, a free-born person who was never lawfully enslaved possessed *ingenuitas*, the status of free birth.²¹¹ Very exceptionally, freedmen could acquire a fictitious free birth in two stages, which removed barriers to positions of status. The emperor could grant a freedman the right to wear the gold ring, *ius anuli aurei*, which made the freedman free-born in relation to society so that he could join the legions, be an equestrian, or hold a Roman priesthood or municipal office, but which maintained the freedman's patron-client obligations to his former master.²¹² Even more unusually, a freedman could receive a *restitutio natalium*, restoration of a fictitious free-birth, which both granted *ingenuitas* and annulled the ex-master's patronal rights.²¹³ Comically, a freedman with restored *ingenuitas* could then

207. Duff 1958 36–49; Watson 1987 35–43; Mouritsen 2011 36–65.

208. Duff 1958 66, 140; Treggiari 1969 67; Watson 1987 44; Mouritsen 2011 72–73.

209. Duff 1958 66, 137; Treggiari 1969 63; Ostrow 1990 365; Mouritsen 2011 73. Exceptionally and of necessity, Julius Caesar allowed freedmen to serve in the town councils of the colonies of freedmen which he founded (Duff 1958 66, 66 n. 3; Treggiari 1969 63).

210. Four attempts in the first century BCE to distribute freedmen into rural tribes, perhaps those of their patrons, were quashed (Treggiari 1969 49–51; Mouritsen 2011 76–78).

211. Buckland 1908 438.

212. Duff 1958 85; Treggiari 1969 66.

213. Duff 1958 86–87.

bring an action against his ex-master to reclaim the cost of his manumission, as the dancer Paris, freed by Nero, successfully did against Nero's daughter Domitia, his ex-master.²¹⁴

A striking feature of the principate of Augustus is a series of laws reforming manumission which, contrary to republican norms, established two new categories of non-citizen freedman, *Latinii Iuniani*, who were eligible for citizenship, and *dediticii*, who were banned from citizenship. In addition to formal manumission which conferred citizenship in the republican period, a master might free a slave informally by letter (*per epistulam*) or by declaration in front of friends or family (*inter amicos*).²¹⁵ A slave thus manumitted did not become a citizen, but, towards the end of the Republic, enjoyed a *de facto* freedom protected by the praetor, although Tacitus described the informally manumitted “as if” held by the bond of slavery (Tac. *Ann.* 13.27).²¹⁶ The *lex Iunia*, perhaps from 17 BCE, confirmed the freedom of informally manumitted slaves and, while not granting them Roman citizenship, assigned them status as *Latini Iuniani*, which provided a path to citizenship.²¹⁷ Junian Latins could obtain Roman citizenship by testimonial from their ex-master to a manumission council, provided the master was over thirty years old, by service to the state, and, if younger than thirty, by marrying and

214. Duff 1958 87–88; Tac. *Ann.* 13.27; *Dig.* 12.4.3.5.

215. Buckland 1908 444; Duff 1958 21–22; Watson 1987 30.

216. Buckland 1908 444–445; Duff 1958 22. Mouritsen treats Tacitus's remark as a rhetorical reference to the *peculium* (Mouritsen 2011 86 n. 84).

217. The date of *lex Iunia* is disputed. It probably preceded the *lex Aelia Sentia*, discussed below (Buckland 1908 534–537; du Plessis 2015 98). Duff, followed by Treggiari, suggests 17 BCE (Duff 1958 75, 210–214; Treggiari 1969 30). *Lex Iulia* also addressed manumission by bonitary owners and, probably, manumission of slaves under 30, although it is unclear which provisions are due to this *lex* and which to *lex Aelia Sentia* (Buckland 1908 533).

having a child that reached one year of age.²¹⁸ The *lex Fufia Caninia* of 2 BCE restricted the number of slaves who could be freed by will, using a sliding scale capped by a maximum.²¹⁹ The *lex Aelia Sentia* of 4 CE, the most comprehensive piece of Augustan legislation, refined manumission procedures and created a new category of non-citizen slaves, *dediticii*.²²⁰ The *lex* specified 20 as the minimum age for a master to manumit formally or informally, but allowed an under-age master to manumit if he could show cause to a manumission council consisting of five Senators and five Equestrians.²²¹ The *lex Aelia Sentia* also restricted the grant of Roman citizen to manumitted slaves who were older than thirty; younger slaves became Junian Latins.²²² The *lex* classed as *dediticii* surrendered foreigners; manumitted slaves who had previously been punished by branding, imprisonment, and chains; those who had been tortured for wrongdoing or convicted of a crime; and those made to fight with wild beasts.²²³ The *lex Aelia Sentia* banned such *dediticii* from citizenship and specified that they were to live more than 100 miles from Rome under penalty of perpetual slavery.²²⁴ This *lex* also addressed freedman–patron relations and provided that a master could take legal action against ungrateful freedman. Resulting remedies could include fines, asset forfeiture, and

218. Duff 1958 80–81; Gardner 1993 40. Marriage and childbearing also resulted in citizenship for the wife and child. This right was extended to all Latins in 75 CE (Duff 1958 81).

219. Buckland 1908 457; Duff 1958 31.

220. The *lex* also voided manumission in case of fraud on a creditor or patron, and addressed relations between freedmen and their patrons (Buckland 1908 544).

221. Buckland 1908 537–539; Duff 1958 33. In the provinces, a manumission council consisted of twenty Roman citizens (Duff 1958 33 n. 1).

222. Buckland 1908 542.

223. Buckland 1908 544.

224. Buckland 1908 544–546.

whipping;²²⁵ Claudius and Nero later included re-enslavement as a sanction in special cases.²²⁶ Table 6 on page 279 summarizes the hierarchy of statuses of slaves and freedmen after the Augustan manumission reforms.²²⁷

Augustus's reforms may well have been intended to address concerns about social order rather than to modify actual manumission practice.²²⁸ Although Dionysius of Halicarnassus claims to know of some masters who freed all of their slaves by will (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.24.6)—a practice which the *lex Fufia Caninia* seems designed to prevent—it is implausible that masters would have regularly impoverished their heirs by freeing all their slaves either by testament, the object of this *lex*, or any other method.²²⁹ Similarly, it is possible but unlikely that masters younger than 20, but not older, would have required the particular restraints of *lex Aelia Sentia*. In his discussion of Augustus's social and political reforms, Suetonius specifically praises Augustus for creating different statuses of freedmen and controlling their access to citizenship, including permanently banning some freedman from ever becoming citizens (*Aug.* 40.4).²³⁰ Dionysius, probably reflecting elite concerns in the early Empire, criticizes contemporary manumission of thieves, housebreakers, prostitutes, and murderers, and compares it unfavorably with practice in the regal period when slaves were freed because

225. Buckland 1908 422–427.

226. Buckland 1908 423; Suet. *Claud.* 5; Tac. *Ann.* 13.26.

227. For a summary of the numerous ways a slave could attain Latin status, see Buckland 1908 548–550.

228. Dench 2005 141–142; Mouritsen 2011 82–83.

229. Champlin 1991 136–142; Gardner 1991 25–26; Mouritsen 2011 83–84. Gardner suggests that *lex Fufia Caninia* aimed to prevent excessive manumission by childless *testators* and to protect heirs more generally (Gardner 1991 37–38).

230. As Dench also notes (Dench 2005 141).

of “meritorious conduct” or bought their freedom with wages earned by “lawful and honest labor” (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.24.4–5; Cary, LCL). Augustus’s manumission reforms probably best make sense as an attempt to address these sorts of concerns by appearing to reestablish a proper social order. Freedmen may have constituted the most sensitive Roman social category, and their status was an indicator of the overall health of society.²³¹

(5) Prejudice Against Freedmen in First-Century CE Rome

Roman literary sources routinely condemn freedmen by denigrating their servile origins and questioning their free status. The harsh invective against freedmen in the writings of Pliny, Suetonius, and Tacitus, who all entered public life in the late-first to early-second century CE, originates in the inversion of status caused by the increased power of imperial freedmen in the early Empire.²³² Republican office holders exercised their power in a domestic setting and commonly employed their slaves and freedman to carry out their duties.²³³ In the imperial period, the emperor’s household went from being one of several aristocratic households to being the centre of Roman power. In consequence, the roles of managing the emperor’s correspondence or petitions, or keeping track of finances—functions filled by slaves or freedmen in any aristocratic household—became, in the emperor’s household, positions that could affect the whole empire.²³⁴ The servile nature of these posts would have made it “undesirable, if not

231. Mouritsen 2011 92.

232. On the careers of Tacitus and Pliny: Syme 1958 I.59–85; of Pliny: Sherwin-White 1966 72–82; of Suetonius: Wallace-Hadrill 1995 73–98.

233. Millar 1977 70; Mouritsen 2011 93.

234. On the servile origins of these roles, Millar 1977 70; Eck 2000 253, 254. On their importance, Eck 2000 240. For a detailed list of such positions, Eck 2000 242–244.

impossible” for freeborn Roman citizens to hold them.²³⁵ By contrast, the republican system of magistracies, as modified by Augustus, limited the scope for senatorial appointments.²³⁶ Thus, although the servile origins of imperial freedmen prevented them from being equestrians or senators, their positions inside the imperial household made them more powerful than their social betters. The result was status anxiety and outrage.²³⁷

First-century Roman authors extol “freedom,” but think it incompatible with freedmen, whose freedom defines their status. Persius, who lived in the second third of the first century CE,²³⁸ underscores the necessity of *libertas*, but contrasts it with the *libertas* that gives a freedman the right to the grain dole (*Per. Sat.* 5.73–75). Tacitus, referring to Rome in *Germania*, comments that freedmen climb above the free-born and nobles in states ruled by kings; in other states, the inferiority of freedmen is proof of freedom (*Germ.* 25.3). Similarly, the Britons retained a desire for freedom and thus derided freedmen (*Tac. Ann.* 14.39).

Tacitus, Pliny, and Suetonius—himself *a studiis* and *a bibliothecis* under Trajan, and *ab epistulis* under Hadrian²³⁹—condemn the perversion of the social order caused by powerful freedmen who acquire a higher status than their betters. For Tacitus, the participation of freedmen in government signifies evil times (*Hist.* 1.76). Tacitus, Pliny,

235. Eck 2000 253.

236. Eck 2000 238, 257. Eck notes that non-senatorial posts are less well-documented (Eck 2000 238–239).

237. Millar 1977 59–60; Eck 2000 253; Mouritsen 2011 98–109.

238. Persius 34–62 CE (Drury 1982 867–868).

239. Wallace-Hadrill 1995 5; Eck 2000 254. These were positions filled by imperial freedmen in the mid-first century CE. See the references cited in page 266 n. 234.

and Suetonius decry examples of status inversion ranging from freedmen who are more powerful than their former masters to freedmen who are honored as gods. Although Vitellius's restored patronage rights over their freedmen to a sad and impoverished group of exiled nobles whom Galba had readmitted to Rome, their crafty freedmen concealed their wealth, and some who entered Caesar's household even became more powerful than their former masters (Tac. *Hist.* 2.92). Notably, Tacitus reports that both nobles and plebs welcomed Vitellius's action, which suggests that both groups saw the benefit in reestablishing a proper social order by placing freedman under obligation to their former masters (*idem*). Expressing a similar sentiment, Seneca notes how absurd it is that the master who once placed a "for sale" sign on Callistus is now banned from Callistus's house (*Ep.* 47.9). Tacitus also condemns freedmen's power over the army. Tacitus reports that Britons, who still loved freedom and did not know of the power of freedmen, were amazed that a Roman general and an army obeyed Nero's freedman Polyclitus (*Ann.* 14.39). Otho perverted the social order, according to Tacitus, by putting his freedman Moschus in charge of the fleet so that he could "keep watch over the fidelity of men more honorable than himself" (*Hist.* 1.87; Moore, LCL). Suetonius, himself an equestrian,²⁴⁰ viewed Vitellius's grant of the gold ring to his lover Asiaticus as a stain on the equestrian order (Suet. *Vit.* 12).²⁴¹ According to Pliny, the power of imperial freedmen made both the Senate and Emperor metaphorical slaves. Pliny devotes two letters to castigating the Senate for degrading itself by awarding praetorian insignia to Pallas, Claudius's freedman (Plin. *Ep.* 7.29, 8.6); by doing so, the Senate showed themselves to

240. Wallace-Hadrill 1995 3.

241. The grant of a gold ring gave Asiaticus a fictitious free birth which allowed him to become an equestrian. See section A4 page 262 above.

be slaves (*Ep.* 8.6).²⁴² Similarly, Pliny comments in his *Panegyricus* to Trajan that most emperors were the slaves of their freedmen and observes that powerful freedmen are the principle sign of a weak emperor (Plin. *Pan.* 88.1–2). Suetonius describes Claudius as the slave and attendant of his wives and freedmen (Suet. *Vit.* 2.5, *Claud.* 29.1). Vitellius went so far as to place golden statues of Pallas and Narcissus among his *lares* (Suet. *Vit.* 2.5), which suggests that he worshipped them as gods.

Roman sources also characterize freedmen as “slaves” and castigate their servile characters. Cicero notes that Clodius’s proposal to distribute freedmen into rural tribes would “deliver us over to our own slaves” (Cic. *Mil.* 87).²⁴³ Tacitus comments that freedmen are not much above slaves (*Germ.* 25.3). Pliny describes Pallas as an insolent slave (Plin. *Ep.* 8.6) and Tacitus calls Vitellius’s freedman “bought property” (*mancipium*; Tac. *Hist.* 2.57). Tacitus often emphasizes that freedmen have a servile character (*ingenium*), which echoes Aristotle and suggests that freedmen remain natural slaves despite their manumission. When Germanicus wants to gauge the troops’ morale before fighting Arminius, he avoids asking the opinion of freedmen because of their servile *ingenium* (Tac. *Ann.* 2.12). Although Galba attempts to restore to returning nobles their patronage rights over their former slaves, the freedmen escape these obligations by means of their servile *ingenia* (Tac. *Hist.* 2.92). Tacitus similarly criticizes the freedman Felix for exercising the power of a king with the character (*ingenium*) of a slave (Tac. *Hist.* 5.9). Martial, who wrote most of his epigrams under Domitian, denigrates the servile birth of Diodorus, probably a freedman, by reminding him that although he

242. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 28

243. Cf. Asc. 52C. On restrictions to the voting power of freedmen, see section A4 page 262 above.

entertains senators and equestrians at dinner, no one thinks he was really born (Mart. 10.27).²⁴⁴ Suetonius reports that Augustus limited manumission to keep Rome pure and uncorrupted by foreign and servile blood (Suet. *Aug.* 40.3), which suggests that the taint of servility was innate and indelible.

Tacitus, Pliny, and Suetonius also criticize freedmen's negative characters. Suetonius labels Asiaticus arrogant and thievish (Suet. *Vit.* 12). Contemplating Pallas's praetorian insignia, Pliny twice derides him as insolent (Plin. *Ep.* 8.6). Tacitus notes that Pallas's harsh arrogance exceeded the bounds of a freedman's conduct (Tac. *Ann.* 13.2). Narcissus, Claudius's freedman, and Felix, Pallas's brother, were both greedy (Tac. *Ann.* 13.1, 12.54). Tacitus also comments that Felix exercised every cruelty and lust (Tac. *Hist.* 5.9). Asiaticus was filthy (Tac. *Hist.* 2.57) and Pallas was dirt and filth (Plin. *Ep.* 8.6). A freedman's stigma could also be physical: Martial ridicules Rufus, a smarmy pretender to equestrian status, by encouraging the reader to remove the bandages on Rufus's head and read what is written there to discover his true status, implying that Rufus was branded when a slave (Mart. 2.29).²⁴⁵

The stain of servile origin could even extend to a freedman's descendants who were themselves legally free-born.²⁴⁶ Describing the sordid end of Larcus Macedo, Pliny notes that he was arrogant and cruel, and either too ready to forget or too conscious of the fact that his father had been a slave (Plin. *Ep.* 3.14). Writing in the first century BCE,

244. Duff and Mouritsen suggest that Diodorus was a freedman (Duff 1958 68; Mouritsen 2011 21 n. 65, 38). Martial gives Clytus the same treatment (8.64). On the dating of Martial's epigrams, see Bramble 1982 602–603.

245. Fitzgerald describes Rufus as a freedman (Fitzgerald 2000 88 n. 6). Williams treats Rufus as a freedman, but notes that he could have been a slave (Williams 2004 112–113, 118).

246. Mouritsen 2011 265, 268.

Horace notes that most men curl up their nose at him because his father was a freedman (Hor. *Sat.* 1.6.6).²⁴⁷ The stigma of servile origins might even remain after several generations: according to Suetonius, Mark Antony taunted August with having an ex-slave as a great-grandfather (Suet. *Aug.* 2).

B. Josephus on Slaves and Freedmen

As a literate, provincial aristocrat and Roman citizen,²⁴⁸ Josephus probably shared or could emulate the mindset of Roman elites, including their negative attitudes towards chattel slaves and freedmen. This section explores the evidence for natural slavery ideology and anti-freedman prejudice in Josephus.

(1) Josephus and Natural Slavery

Josephus's accounts of Pseudo-Alexander in *Jewish War* and *Antiquities* and his descriptions of the Mosaic laws of marriage and valid witnesses in *Antiquities* suggest he shared mainstream, contemporary views of natural slavery.

Following the description of Herod's death in 4 BC, *Jewish War* recounts the rise and a fall of a pretender who claimed to be Herod's son Alexander, whom Herod had put to death in 7 BC.²⁴⁹ This false Alexander was a Jew by descent and had grown up in the house of a Roman freedman in Sidon (*War* 2.101). Advised by a compatriot, he won over the Jews of Crete and Melos by claiming to have escaped execution and then proceeded to Rome (2.102–105). Augustus, who had presided over Alexander's trial (1.452), suspected an impostor and sent Celadus, who knew Alexander, to fetch the

247. Cf. *Sat.* 1.6.45–46, *Epist.* 1.20.20. Horace 65 BCE—8 BCE (Drury 1982 850).

248. *Life* 423.

249. *War* 1.550–551.

claimant (2.105). Celadus immediately recognized facial differences and perceived that his body was harder than Alexander's and that he had a slave-like appearance (δουλοφανής; 2.107).²⁵⁰ Augustus executed the compatriot, but placed the false Alexander among his rowers because of the good condition of his body (2.110). According to the parallel account in *Antiquities* 17, Augustus recognized the impostor because, in contrast to the body of the real Alexander which luxury and nobility had made soft, work had hardened the false Alexander's body (17.333). Augustus then ironically questioned why the impostor had not brought along his brother Aristobulus to claim that rule which was his right by (noble) birth (17.334). As in *War* 2, Augustus consigned him to the fleet on account of his physical strength. The episode suggests that, despite pseudo-Alexander's pretense of noble birth, a discerning observer could perceive that he was really servile.²⁵¹ Aristotle emphasizes that natural slaves and animals have strong bodies because they lack sufficient reason (*Pol.* I.5 1254b 17–19, 24–31). Thus, Pseudo-Alexander's physical strength and slavish look mark him out as a slave by nature. Mason comments that, by assigning him to the rowers, Augustus had enslaved him, which, if true, means Augustus returned pseudo-Alexander to his proper status.²⁵²

250. This is the only use of δουλοφανής in Greek literature, as Mason notes (Mason 2008 69 n. 644).

251. It is unclear how he managed to fool the Jews of Crete and Melos, who probably also knew what slaves looked like.

252. Mason 2008 71 n. 662. Suetonius emphasizes that Augustus used 20,000 *freed* slaves as oarsmen in his new fleet after the Sicilian war (Suet. *Aug.* 16). Mouritsen notes that freedmen were commonly used as oarsmen, but slaves only on occasion (Mouritsen 2011 72).

Mason and Millar point out the parallels with the accounts of impostors of Nero. Mason suggests that Josephus's audience would have known the first Nero impersonator, who was either a slave or freedman (Mason 2008 66 n. 607; Millar 1964 217–218; Tac. *Hist.* 2.8).

persons, slaves could not marry.²⁵⁷ Josephus might, however, have had in mind a development in Jewish law among the schools of Shammai and Hillel which appears to prohibit slave-free marriage, although the Mishnaic case of the half-free/half-slave man may be hypothetical.²⁵⁸ Revealingly, Josephus has Moses justify the ban on free-slave marriage by noting that only in this way can one produce children with free minds (τὰ φρονήματα ἐλευθέρια) who are directed towards virtue (ἀρετή; *Ant.* 4.245).²⁵⁹ Josephus's rationale echoes Aristotle's account of natural slavery which suggests that reason and virtue characterize the person who is *not* a slave by nature.²⁶⁰

Josephus's expansion and explanation of the rules of witnesses also reflects the influence of natural slavery theory. Deuteronomy 19:5 specifies that no court case can be judged on the basis of one witness and directs that there be two or three witnesses; Dt 17:6 and Nu 35:30 require two witnesses for capital cases. None of these passages define who qualifies as a valid witness. *Antiquities* 4.219 reports that a valid case requires two

comments that the Bible does not prohibit free men from marrying slave women (Feldman 2000 423 n. 775).

257. Buckland 1908 76.

258. Beit Shammai argue that a man half-free and half-slave (perhaps a slave owned jointly, who has been manumitted by one owner) can marry neither slave, because he is free, nor free, because he is a slave; Beit Hillel agree (*m. Git.* 4:5). The redactor of the Mishnah (c. 200 CE, cf. Strack and Stemberger 1991 124–139), reports that a slave woman can not have a valid betrothal, which presumably means she can not marry (*m. Qid.* 3:12, cf. also *m. Qid.* 4:1, *m. Ket.* 3:1).

259. According to Josephus, Moses says that children can not have free minds etc. if they are the product of a shameful marriage (ἐκ γάμων φύντες αἰσχρῶν) or from a union of unfree passion (ἐξ ἐπιθυμίας οὐκ ἐλευθερίας συνελθόντων; *Ant.* 4.245). Thackeray renders ἐξ ἐπιθυμίας οὐκ ἐλευθερίας as “from ignoble passion;” Nodet has “d’une passion illégitime” (Thackeray, LCL; Nodet, Cérif). The author's reading agrees with Feldman (Feldman, BJC).

260. λόγος: Arist. *Pol.* I.5 1254b 21–23 (cf. reason as διάνοια: I.2 1252a 32, as τὸ βουλευτικόν; I.13 1260a 12, as προαίρεσις; III.9 1260a 34); ἀρετή: I.6 1255a 39; I.13 1260a 32, 35; 1260b 3. For a discussion of the traits that Aristotle specifies define a person who is not a slave by nature, see Chapter 6 A1 page 237 f.

or three witnesses and then expands the biblical prescription by explaining that the witnesses' past lives should prove the truth of their testimony and specifying that woman and slaves are invalid witnesses. By contrast, an early Mishnaic source allows the testimony of slaves in cases of remarriage, although the redactional layer is inconsistent.²⁶¹ Josephus's ban on slave testimony is more comprehensive than that in Roman law, which admits slave testimony in certain cases if obtained under torture.²⁶² Josephus explains that slaves are invalid witnesses because of the ignobility of their soul (διὰ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀγένειαν; *Ant.* 4.219), which combines the idea of low birth with that of a defective soul. Aristotle repeatedly specifies that noble birth (εὐγένεια) defines those who do not deserve to be slaves (*Pol.* I.6 1255a 33, 35, 40; cf. I.6 1255a 27). He also notes that the soul rules the body with the rule of a master (I.5 1254b 4–5) and that it is natural (I.5 1254a 34–36) or natural and beneficial (I.5 1254b 6–8) for the soul to rule the body. The ignoble soul of Josephus's invalid slave witness identifies him as an Aristotelian slave by nature.

261. R. Gamliel the Elder (fl. first half the first century CE; Schürer–Vermes II: 367 f.) allows a woman whose husband may have died to remarry on the testimony of one witness, and the anonymous redactor notes that “they established” that women and male or female slaves are valid witnesses for such a case (*m. Yeb.* 1:16). The anonymous redactor prescribes only freemen who are members of the covenant as witnesses for injury compensation cases (*m. B. Qam.* 1:3), and forbids slaves and other miscreants from testifying about the new moon (*m. R.H.* 1:8), but omits slaves from the list of invalid witnesses in property cases (*m. Sanh.* 3:3).

262. In Roman civil law, slaves were required to give evidence in cases that concerned them where there was no other evidence. In criminal law, slaves could testify when there was a need for more evidence and there was at least one other witness. See Buckland 1908 86–88.

(2) Josephus and Freedmen

Josephus probably shared contemporary biases about powerful freedmen and, with few exceptions, portrays them negatively.

Josephus frequently implicates freedmen in calculated perversions of power and money. Josephus comments that Nero abused his rule by entrusting affairs to the most wicked, worthless freedmen Nymphidius and Tigellinus, who subsequently conspired against him (*War* 4.492–493). Agrippa’s freedman Eutychus betrayed him by repeating to Tiberius Agrippa’s comment to Gaius that he wished Tiberius might make Gaius his successor and then die; Tiberius immediately imprisoned Agrippa as a result (*Ant.* 18.168–169, 187–191). The Syrians of Caesarea got Nero to revoke the Jews’ civic rights in the city by bribing Beryllus, Nero’s *ab epistulis Graecis* and former tutor, and probably a freedman (*Ant.* 20.183). This same edict caused the Jews’ subsequent misfortunes because it pushed the Jews of Caesarea into greater *stasis* until they ignited the war (*Ant.* 20.184).²⁶³ Callistus, freedman of Gaius and formerly freedman of Claudius, attained the power of a tyrant by instilling fear and amassing wealth, by taking bribes, committing the highest outrages, and using his power unjustly (*Ant.* 19.64–65). Josephus’s criticism of Callistus closely resembles the negative comments about freedmen in Pliny, Tacitus, and Suetonius, who wrote after Josephus.²⁶⁴

263. On the disorder in Caesarea, cf. *Ant.* 20.173–177, *War* 2.266–270.

264. A widely held view in scholarship, dating back to Mommsen, holds that Josephus used a single Roman source for the narrative about the death of Caligula and the accession of Claudius in *Ant.* 19.1–273 (Mommsen 1870, Momigliano 1932, Balsdon 1934, cf. also the sources listed in Feldman 1962 320 n. 3 and Goud 1996 472 n. 4). According to this view, Josephus’s comments about Callistus in *Ant.* 19.64–69 would reflect his Roman source, not his own views. Goud, however, argues convincingly that Josephus’s account in *Ant.* 19 probably uses three sources, but seems to suggest both that *Ant.* 19.66 contains traces of a source which portrays Claudius favorably at 19.162–165 and that 19.68–69 are Josephus’s own comments about Callistus (Goud 1996 478, 482).

Josephus portray's Felix, the freedman procurator of Judea, in greater detail—more critically in *Ant.* 20 than in *War* 2—but oddly never mentions Felix's servile origins. Josephus notes that Felix restored order in Judea by fighting brigands and impostors,²⁶⁵ but also committed grievous wrongs including employing a Jewish, Cretan, fake magician to persuade Herod's great-granddaughter to marry him in violation of Jewish law (*Ant.* 20.142–143); sending priests of perfect character to Rome on a minor charge (*Life* 13); and silencing the critical high priest Jonathan by having him assassinated (*Ant.* 20.162–164). Felix would have suffered punishment for his misdeeds had not his brother Pallas intervened on his behalf (*Ant.* 20.182). Josephus, who went to Rome to defend the priests (*Life* 13), must have known that both Felix and Pallas were freedman—Pliny and Tacitus criticize them as cruel or arrogant freedmen.²⁶⁶ Josephus may have written the more critical portrait of Felix in *Life* and *Ant.* 20 after the death of Agrippa, whose sister Felix married. Perhaps Felix's servile origins would have been too demeaning to Agrippa's family for Josephus to mention even after his death, but this is

However, *Ant.* 19.64–69 forms a separate anecdote about Callistus full of Josephus's own moralizing comments about Callistus, similar to Josephus's negative portrayals of other figures in *Ant.* 16, 18 19, 20 (Feldman recognizes the Callistus section as separate anecdote [Feldman 1962 323]; and observes [page 326] that Josephus condemns figures such as Caligula, Herod, and Gessius throughout the last quarter of *Antiquities*). Josephus's characterization of Callistus is probably his own composition, perhaps influenced by the negative views of Pallas and Callistus prevailing in near-contemporary Roman sources.

265. Brigands and impostors: *War* 2.253, 258–260, *Ant.* 20.160–161; the Egyptian: *War* 2.261–263, *Ant.* 20.169–172.

266. Tacitus criticizes Felix's cruelty, lust, and servile character (*servile ingenium*, Tac. *Hist.* 5.9). Suetonius reports that Claudius appointed Felix to the governorship of Judea because he was a favored freedman (Suet. *Claud.* 28). Pliny and Tacitus both pillory Pallas's arrogance and excessive power (Plin. *Ep.* 7.29, 8.6; Tac. *Ann.* 13.2, 4). Suetonius reports that Claudius appointed Felix to the governorship of Judea because he was a favored freedman (Suet. *Claud.* 28).

speculative.

Table 6: Statuses of Slaves and Freedmen after the Augustan Manumission Reforms

Status of person	How attained
<i>ingenui cives Romani</i> + <i>liberti</i> granted <i>restitutio natalium</i>	Freeborn Roman citizens + Freed persons granted “restoration of (free) birth”
<i>liberti</i> granted <i>ius anuli aurei</i>	Freed persons granted the right to wear the gold ring by Emperor
<i>liberti cives Romani</i>	Formally manumitted slaves, as Roman citizens
<i>Latini Iuniani</i>	Slaves manumitted informally via the <i>lex Iunia</i> , and slaves formally manumitted when younger than 30 via the <i>lex Aelia Sentia</i>
<i>dediticii</i>	Manumitted slaves who had been fettered, etc., via the <i>lex Aelia Sentia</i>
<i>servi</i>	Born into servitude or enslaved as war captives

Chapter 7 - Josephus on the Servile Origins of the Jews

Introduction

The story of the Israelites' compulsory labor in Egypt, which the tradition describes as "slavery," is central to the Jews' story of their national origins and is the basis for biblical historiography.¹ It was also a fundamental part of Jewish self-identification in the first century CE, as the evidence of Passover pilgrimage to Jerusalem suggests.² Yet, although several Greek and Latin authors appear to have thought that the Jews were originally Egyptians, none seems familiar with the Jews' own story of their servitude in Egypt.³ Josephus knew that his Roman audience thought that the Jews were originally Egyptians and, although *Jewish War* gives a confused picture of Jewish origins, *Antiquities* and *Apion* specifically rebut that view.⁴ Josephus probably also knew that his Roman audience was unfamiliar with the story of the Jews' "slavery" in Egypt, and that they harbored deeply negative views of slaves and freedmen, influenced by the theory of natural slavery, and ambivalent views of Rome's own partly servile origins.⁵ Two other first century CE Jewish authors, Philo and Pseudo-Philo, understood the "slavery" of the exodus to be literal, chattel slavery rather than a

1. Loewenstamm 1992 24–25 and Chapter 1 page 27 ff.

2. Chapter 1 page 29 f.

3. Chapter 3 B page 124 ff. and C page 148 ff.

4. Chapter 5 B2 page 196 ff. and C2 page 212 ff.

5. Chapter 6 A2–A5 page 240 ff.

metaphor for oppression;⁶ Josephus might have held the same view or known that such an interpretation was possible. These considerations might have deterred Josephus, who strives to portray the Jews, their customs, and their institutions in a positive light, from telling his Roman audience the story of the Jews' slavery in Egypt or recounting the slavery of individuals in the patriarchal period. This chapter examines how Josephus presents the exodus story of the Jews' servitude in *Jewish War*, *Jewish Antiquities*, and *Against Apion*.

A. *Jewish War*

Josephus declares in the proem that *Jewish War* will recount the Jews' war against the Romans (*War* 1.1–3), but not the Jews' ἀρχαιολογία (1.17). Yet, *Jewish War* makes passing references to the Jews' ancient history or to festivals which mention Egypt. Although Josephus had no reason to recount the Jews' servitude in every reference to Egypt and the Jews' remote past in *Jewish War*, he refers to slavery in Egypt once and twice seems to avoid mentioning it.

The feasts of unleavened bread and Passover play a prominent role in the narrative where they appear nine times, often as periods of potential disorder when Jerusalem is full of pilgrims.⁷ One of *War*'s two explanations of the festival of unleavened bread refers to the Jews' slavery in Egypt.⁸ Reporting the Sicarii's raids on Engaddi and the surrounding district from Masada during the festival of unleavened bread, probably in 68 CE, Josephus notes that Jews have kept the festival ever since they

6. Chapter 2 B3a page 101 ff. On the dating of *LAB*, see page 75 n. 100.

7. Unleavened bread: *War* 2.10, 224, 244, 280; 4.402; 5.99; 6.290, 421; Passover/πάσχα: *War* 2.10; 6.423.

8. Both references to πάσχα describe it as a time when the Jews make sacrifices.

were released from slavery (δουλεία) to the Egyptians and returned to their ancestral land (*War* 4.402). This explanation, however, does not date the release from slavery in Egypt to a particular period in Jewish history. Because the summary of *Jewish War* in the proem (1.19–29) does not mention a departure from Egypt and the narrative begins with Antiochus Epiphanes (1.31), an attentive reader might have linked the reference to slavery in 4.402 with Josephus’s comment in the proem that he would *not* relate the Jews’ ἀρχαιολογία, which would include their migration from Egypt (1.17).⁹ Such a reader might have concluded that the festival celebrated an event in the Jews’ ancient history, but the precise meaning of the Jews’ δουλεία in 4.402 would probably have been unclear. However, given that *Jewish War* frequently describes the Jews’ and other nations’ subservience to Rome as δουλεία, Josephus’s audience might have concluded that the Jews were politically subject to the Egyptians; his Roman audience had no grounds to suppose that the Jews had been chattel slaves.¹⁰

Josephus mentions Egypt in three other passages in *Jewish War* where he might have referred to the Jews’ servitude. In the proem, as noted, Josephus comments that he will not tell the story of the Jews’ ancient history, including their migration from Egypt (1.17). Josephus’s comment is brief and he is under no obligation to elaborate further on what is he not going to discuss; several biblical epitomes of Jewish history refer to the

9. *War* 1.17’s reference to the Jews’ migration from Egypt might have confirmed the probably widespread belief that the Jews were originally Egyptians; see Chapter 5 A page 186 ff.

10. Josephus describes the Jews’ subservience to Rome as δουλεία in passages before *War* 4.402 (Agrippa’s speech: 2.349, 355; Ananus’ speech: 4.175), and does so in the sequel (Josephus’s speech: 5.395; Titus’ speech: 6.42; Mary’s speech: 6.206; views of the Sicarii: 7.255; Eleazar’s speech: 7.323–24, 334, 336, 382, 385). Agrippa’s speech in *War* 2 lists many nations in (metaphorical) δουλεία to Rome (Athenians, 2.358; Greeks, 2.364; Gauls 2.373; Iberians, 2.375; Germans, 2.377; Britons, 2.378; Parthians, 2.379).

Israelites' sojourn in Egypt without mentioning servitude.¹¹ Thus, this omission might not be significant. More probative are two passages where Josephus omits mention of the Jews' servitude when referring to Egypt and the Jews' ancient history.

In 70 CE, John and his band gain access to the inner temple by mingling with the crowds during the festival of unleavened bread (*War* 5.99–100). Equivocally, Josephus notes that the festival, on the 14th of Xanthicus, commemorates what the Jews suppose (δοκέω) to be the first time they “got rid of” or “were delivered from” (ἀπηλλάχθην) the Egyptians (*War* 5.99).¹² The verb ἀπηλλάχθην usually suggests getting rid of a situation and does not ordinarily connote slavery; Thucydides frequently uses ἀπηλλάχθην to mean getting rid of foreign rule, doubts, or danger, and in an instance where he uses it to mean getting rid of (political) servitude, he specifically adds δουλεία.¹³ Thus, Josephus's use of ἀπηλλάχθην leaves the Jews' relationship with the Egyptians rather vague.¹⁴ The personal use of δοκέω further obfuscates things by undermining the reliability of the Jews' supposition, suggesting that 14 Xanthicus might not be the correct date or that some other aspect of the explanation is in doubt.¹⁵ Again, Josephus does not place the event in time, but a discerning reader might have linked this reference back to *War* 4.402

11. Nu 20.14-16; Dt 26.5-10; Josh 24.2-13 (but cf. 24.17); 1 Sam 12.7-12; Jer 32.16-25; Amos 2.9-11; Ps 105, 106, 135, 136.

12. The meaning of τὸν πρῶτον...καιρὸν is ambiguous. Thackeray improbably suggests it is an allusion to the Jews' “later liberation from Babylonia” (Thackeray 1928 31 n. c). Shatzman rejects this and comments that Josephus means that 14 Xanthicus is the first day of the festival (Shatzman 2009 450 n. 99). See also page 191 n. 19.

13. Brasidas warns the Acanthians not to prevent the Greeks “from escaping bondage” (δουλείας ἀπαλλαγῆναι, Thuc. 4.87.3; Smith, LCL).

14. Thackeray, Pelletier, and Michel & Bauernfeind render ἀπηλλάχθην with the ambiguous “liberation.” Ullman has “liberation from slavery” (שחרורם מעבדות), which goes beyond the sense of ἀπηλλάχθην.

15. Thackeray comments that δοκέω and τὸν πρῶτον...καιρὸν suggest “the hand of a non-Jewish συνεργός,” but this is not required (Thackeray 1928 425 n. c).

and 1.17.

Josephus also mentions the Jews' ancient sojourn in Egypt in a précis of Jewish history in his speech before the walls of Jerusalem. When the first half of his speech (*War* 5.362–374) receives curses and missiles in reply, Josephus turns to recounting episodes from the Jews' national history (5.375). After warning his audience that they may learn that are fighting God not the Romans (5.376–378), Josephus speaks of Sarah (5.379) and Abraham (5.380), whose descriptions as “the mother of the nation” and “the forefather” clarify that he is recounting the Jews' ancient history. Josephus then rhetorically asks if he should mention their fathers' migration to Egypt where they were tyrannized and subject to foreign kings for 400 years (5.382). Although they might have taken up arms, they entrusted themselves to God (5.382) and were sent out under guard (5.383). The reference to 400 years in Egypt clearly echoes God's promise to Abraham in Gn 15:13 that his descendants will be slaves in a foreign land. Josephus's Roman audience would not have recognized this allusion, but it suggests that Josephus deliberately omits mention of slavery here.¹⁶

Whether or not Josephus intentionally fails to mention the Jews' slavery in Egypt in *War* 5.99 and 5.382–383, these passages may have given or reinforced the impression that Jews' δουλεία in Egypt in *War* 4.402 is a reference to political subjugation, not to chattel slavery.

16. On Greek and Latin authors' ignorance of the Exodus story of the Jews' slavery in Egypt, see Chapter 3 C page 148 ff.

B. Jewish Antiquities

In *Antiquities*, Josephus returns to a task he had deliberately avoided in *Jewish War*, relating the Jews' ἀρχαιολογία¹⁷ based on their sacred writings,¹⁸ themselves a history of five thousand years,¹⁹ which he pledges to do with ἀκρίβεια,²⁰ neither adding nor omitting any details.²¹ Josephus had to consider how to present the Jews' servitude in *Antiquities* where it is part of the biblical narrative, but nothing compelled him to mention it when retelling sections of the Bible which do not refer to it. As in *Jewish War*,²² Josephus frequently describes the Jews' political subjugation to foreign powers as δουλεία in *Antiquities* (see Table 7, page 309). Josephus omits or downplays the Jews' national servitude in Egypt at important points in the narrative, but adds some references to the Jews' slavery when it is absent in his biblical source or when he could have followed a passage that omits it. Similarly, Josephus omits or recasts the servitude of individuals in the patriarchal era.

(1) National Servitude

(a) Passages Adding References to Slavery

Josephus often shapes his biblical source material by expanding or contracting the narrative, composing or embroidering speeches, and by summarizing Pentateuchal

17. *Ant.* 1.6.

18. *Ant.* 1.5, 13, 17, 26; 10.218; 20.26. In *War* 1.17, Josephus describes these writings as an ἀρχαιολογία, composed with great ἀκρίβεια by Jews before him.

19. *Ant.* 1.13. As noted (page 37 n. 109), Rajak comments that this was an impressive claim to make, as little else in the ancient world could claim such great antiquity (Rajak 1982 469).

20. *Ant.* 1.17; 9.208; 20.260, 263.

21. *Ant.* 1.17, 26; 4.196; 20.261.

22. See above page 283 and page 283 n. 10.

law. Some of these passages include or add references to slavery in Egypt which Josephus might have chosen to omit.

Following standard practice in ancient historiography, Josephus composes speeches for protagonists in his narrative; two of these speeches include added references to the Jews' servitude in Egypt. During the insurrection of Korach in Nu 16, Moses reminds the Israelites that God had been directing his actions (Nu 16.28-30). In the lengthy account in *Ant.* 4.14–62, by contrast, Moses delivers a 10 Niese section speech and observes that he had worked for the Israelites' liberty (*Ant.* 4.42), and that God had allowed them to flee their slavery (δουλεία) to the Egyptians (*Ant.* 4.44), thus adding a reference to slavery not found in Nu 16.

Josephus also adds a reference to servitude to a speech from outside the Pentateuch. In 1 Sam, while warning the Israelites against appointing a king, Samuel twice refers to the exodus, noting that God brought their ancestors out of Egypt (1 Sam 12:6) and that God had appointed Moses and Aaron who brought them out of Egypt (1 Sam 12:8). In LXX 1 Sam 12:8, Samuel adds that the Egyptians had humiliated the Israelites. Josephus expands both verses 12:6 and 12:8 by adding references to slavery. In *Ant.* 6.86, Samuel comments that God had rescued their fathers from slavery (δουλεία) to the Egyptians, and in *Ant.* 6.89 that the Egyptians had brought them into slavery (δουλεία) and outrage.

Antiquities condenses the biblical account of the burning bush and the subsequent series of meetings between Moses and Pharaoh, and Moses and God, and retains one reference to servitude in Egypt while dropping another. In Ex 3–4, God appears in the burning bush and tells Moses that he has come to deliver his people from Egypt (Ex 3:8,

17). God knows the Israelites' suffering (Ex 3:7, 17) and pain (Ex 3:7), and has seen how the Egyptians are oppressing them (Ex 3:9), but he does not mention slavery. After Moses's first meeting with Pharaoh ends in failure (Ex 5:1–21), he meets with God a second time (Ex 5:22–6:13). God tells Moses that he has heard the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving or forcing to work (Hifil עבד; Ex 6:5), and remembered his covenant with their forefathers (Ex 6:1–5). He then directs Moses to tell the Israelites that he will save them from their labor or service (מִעֲבָדֶיךָ; Ex 6:6). Moses meets with Pharaoh (Ex 7:8) and the plagues follow. LXX Exodus sharpens God's meaning in Ex 6 by using καταδουλόω, “to enslave,” in 6:5 and δουλεία, “slavery,” in Ex 6:6.

In Josephus's account of the burning bush, God makes one reference to delivering the Israelites from the outrage (ὑβρις) they are suffering in Egypt, using the term Josephus employs in *Ant.* 2.202 in his retelling of Ex 1:11–14,²³ and, at the end of the scene, urges Moses to hurry to Egypt so as not to prolong the Hebrews' suffering in slavery in Egypt (ἐν δουλεία κακοπαθέω; *Ant.* 2.274)—a detail not found in Ex 3 or 4. Josephus may thus have combined God's two references to the Jews' servitude in Ex 6:5–6 into this single remark.²⁴

Josephus's modified account of the incident at Rephidim includes an added reference to slavery. After departing the wilderness of Zin where God gives them manna,

23. See the discussion below in section B1b page 291.

24. Josephus may have had other motives for omitting God's remarks in Ex 6:1–13. Feldman comments that Josephus did not want to portray the Israelites as displacing the Canaanites (cf. Ex 6:4; Feldman 2000 216 n. 766; for a similar comment on *Ant.* 2.269, cf. Feldman 2000 209 n. 709). Feldman also suggests both that Josephus wanted to portray the Israelites as conquering warriors (comparing Gn 15:13–16 with *Ant.* 1.185; Feldman 1998b 299) and that Josephus plays down Joshua's cruelty to the Canaanites when he conquers the land (comparing sections in Josh 8, 10, 11, 23 with parallels in *Ant.* 5; Feldman 1998b 445–446, 459–460).

the Israelites arrive at Rephidim (Ex 16.1–17.1). In six words Ex 17:8 reports that Amalek fought them there. In Josephus’s expanded 4-section account, the Amalekite kings exhort each other to go to war against “the Hebrews,” warning that an alien army recently escaped from slavery to the Egyptians (ἡ Αἰγυπτίων...δουλεία) is preparing to attack (*Ant.* 3.40).²⁵

Josephus’s description of the laws of Passover in *Ant.* 3 includes an added reference to slavery in Egypt not found in his sources for the laws of sacrifices, Nu 28–29 and Lv 23, but possibly borrowed from Dt 16. *Antiquities* includes two lengthy descriptions of Jewish law, *Ant.* 3.90–286 and 4.196–301. At *Ant.* 4.197, Josephus notes that he has chosen to present the laws in a systematic order which is his own innovation, because Moses wrote down the laws in a scattered way as God presented them to him. Josephus also reorders the laws that he presents in *Ant* 3 and combines laws from different parts of the Pentateuch. After having described daily, weekly, and monthly sacrifices (*Ant.* 3.237–238) following the order in Nu 28:3–15, Josephus reorders the list of appointed sacrificial times in Nu 28–9 and Lv 23, and begins with the offerings for the three special times in the seventh month of the year (*Ant.* 3.239–247) rather than starting with Passover, as do Nu 28:16 and Lv 23:5. *Antiquities* 3.248 reports that Moses directed the Jews to make the passover sacrifice in the month of Xanthichus, which the Jews call Nisan, when the sun is in Aries, because that was the time when the Jews were freed from slavery (δουλεία) in Egypt. Josephus’s account of unleavened bread, which follows in *Ant.* 3.249, then combines the descriptions of Lv 23.6–8 and Nu 28:17–22. Numbers

25. *Mekhilta d’Rav Yishmael, Amalek I*, comments that Amalek rallied other nations to attack the Israelites, but does not mention slavery (Feldman 2000 241 n. 84). *Mekhilta d’Rav Yishmael* contains some Tannaitic material, but was perhaps redacted in the second half of the the third century CE (Strack and Stemberger 1991 253–255).

28–29 does not mention Egypt, and Lv 23 connects only the festival of booths to the departure from Egypt (Lv 23:43), a reference which Josephus omits (*Ant.* 3.244–247). In referring to δουλεία in *Ant.* 3.248, Josephus might have had in mind the direction in Dt 16:12 to observe all three pilgrimage festivals (cf. Dt 16:1–10) and to remember that the people were slaves in Egypt. Deuteronomy, however, repeatedly mentions the Israelites’ servitude in Egypt.²⁶ Thus, the reference to slavery in Josephus’s synthetic account of Passover, clearly aimed at a non-Jewish audience (“Hyperbertaeus,” *Ant.* 3.239; “Xanthicus...Aries,” *Ant.* 2.348) and part of Josephus’s reordered account of sacrifices, is Josephus’s addition.

(b) Passages Downplaying Servile Origins

Although he adds some references to the Jews’ servitude in Egypt in recounting sections of the Bible that do not mention it, Josephus appears deliberately to downplay the Jews’ servile origins at important points in *Antiquities*’ version of the biblical narrative.

God’s prediction to Abraham in Gn 15:13–14 contains the first reference to the Jews’ national servitude in the Pentateuch. In a dream, God tells Abraham that his descendants will be strangers in a land not their own, that they shall “serve” the inhabitants (וַעֲבָדוּם) and that the inhabitants will oppress (עָנָה) them for four hundred years (Gn 15:13).²⁷ God will judge the nation that they “serve” (יַעֲבֹדוּ) and Abraham’s descendants will go forth with great wealth (Gn 15:14). God’s promise is slightly

26. Moses often describes Egypt as the “place of slavery/בית עבדים” (Dt 5:6; 6:12; 7:8; 8:14; 13:6, 11), or enjoins the Israelites to remember that they were slaves in Egypt (Dt 5:15; 6:21; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22). See Chapter 2 B1a (ii) page 82 f. and B2a page 88 f.

27. The subject of וַעֲבָדוּם is the object of וַעֲנֵנוּ אֹתָם and vice-versa; see page 80.

ambiguous: God does not name the foreign nation, and עבד can mean “working,” “serving,” or “being a slave.”²⁸ LXX Gn 15:13–14 clarifies that Abraham’s descendants will be slaves and uses δουλόω in v. 13 and δουλεύω in v. 14. Josephus’s version is strikingly different. In *Ant.* 1.185, a divine voice tells Abraham that his progeny will have “evil neighbors” (πόνηροι... γείτονες) in Egypt for four hundred years, during which time the Israelites will “suffer.” Josephus omits Gn 15’s two references to slavery, but specifies Egypt as the foreign land.²⁹

Exodus 1:8–14 describes how the Israelites became subject to compulsory labour, which the tradition characterizes as “slavery,” and echoes God’s promise in Gn 15 by repeated use of ענה and עבד. To prevent the Israelites’ continued increase, the Egyptians oppress (ענה) them with compulsory labour, and the Israelites build Pithom and Raamses (Ex 1:11). The Israelites continue to increase despite the Egyptians’ oppression (ענה; Ex 1:12). Consequently, the Egyptians force the Israelites “to work under duress” or “enslave” them (Hifil עבד plus בפרך; Ex 1:13) and embitter their lives with the labor which they force the the Israelites to do under duress or in which they “enslave” them (Qal עבד plus בפרך; Ex 1:14).³⁰ LXX Ex 1:11–12 recalls God’s promise to Abraham by employing both verbs that LXX Gn 15:14 uses to render ענה: the Egyptians maltreat the

28. See the discussion in Chapter 2 B1a(i) page 80.

29. Feldman highlights “evil neighbors” as Josephus’s addition but suggests it is apologetic and aims (a) to counter the idea that Jews are misanthropes (Feldman 1998b 243) and (b) to blame the Egyptians for the Israelites’ sufferings (Feldman 1998c 84). Spilsbury suggests “evil neighbors” is an attempt to present the Egyptians as Israel’s enemy (Spilsbury 1998 114–115). Feldman notes Josephus’s omission of slavery (Feldman 2000 69 n. 581); Spilsbury does not.

30. See the discussion and notes in Ch2 B1a2 page 81 f. and page 82 n. 117. Both Hifil עבד and Qal עבד plus ב can mean “to enslave” or “to cause to work.” Propp comments that Hifil עבד plus בפרך “connotes the abuse of slaves” (Propp 1999 134). Hifil עבד does not require a ב to express means; Qal עבד does (Milgrom 2000 2220).

Israelites (κακώω) and humble (ταπεινώω) them. LXX Ex 1:13 uses the more graphic expression καταδυναστεύω “oppress with force,” for Hifil עבד,³¹ and LXX Ex 1:14 renders Qal עבד plus כ with καταδουλόω, “to enslave.”³²

Josephus’s account says nothing about slavery. Motivated by envy of the Israelites’ prosperity (*Ant.* 2.201), which they gained through virtue and a natural disposition for labor, the Egyptians mock the Israelites terribly (δεινῶς ἐνυβρίζω) and contrive various hardships for them (*Ant.* 2.202). The Egyptians order the Israelites to build canals, city walls, and pyramids. As a result, the Israelites teach themselves many skills and become accustomed to these labors (*Ant.* 2.203).³³ Although the Egyptians try to destroy them, the Israelites live through 400 years of hardships (*Ant.* 2.204). The reference to 400 years in *Ant.* 2.204, not found in Ex 1, links the passage back to *Ant.* 1.185, which reports God’s prediction that Abraham’s descendants would have evil neighbors for 400 years in Egypt, but omits Gn 15’s reference to slavery. Josephus’s version of Ex 1:8–14 focusses on the Israelites’ compulsory labor and ignores their slavery. Instead, *Antiquities* describes the Egyptian’s mistreatment of the Israelites using ἐνυβρίζω, a term the LXX never employs to describe the Egyptians’ behavior.³⁴ The

31. Wevers 1990 6

32. Wevers suggests that LXX Exodus’s fondness for variation might explain the use of different Greek terms to translate עבד (Wevers 1990 7, 300, and *passim*).

33. The unusual expression ὡς...ἀναδιδάσκεσθαι καὶ...γενέσθαι... (*Ant.* 2.203) is probably consecutive (the author; Thackeray, LCL), and not final (Feldman, BJC), cf. Smyth 1956 §3000 and references there. Feldman’s reading—that the Egyptians wanted the Israelites to get used to toil—makes no sense in context: *Ant.* 2.204 notes that the Egyptians wanted “to destroy them with toil” (Feldman, BJC). Josephus’s comment in *Ant.* 2.203 that the Israelites became accustomed to their labors is odd: *Ant.* 2.202 has just explained that the Israelites prospered because of their aptitude for work.

34. Feldman 2000 187 n. 568. Josephus’s embroidered account of Abraham and Sarah’s visit to Egypt from Gn 12:10–20 twice describes Pharaoh’s behavior towards Sarah using ὑβρίζω/ἐνυβρίζω (*Ant.* 1.164–165), a term not used by the LXX. On *Antiquities*’s

subsequent account of the burning bush also uses ὄβρις to describe the Israelites' plight in Egypt (*Ant.* 2.268). Elsewhere, Josephus uses both ὄβρις and δουλεία to describe the Israelites' suffering in Egypt: Josephus adds references both to slavery (δουλεία) and to oppression (ὄβρις) in Egypt to his version of Samuel's warning in 1 Sam 12:8 (*Ant.* 6.89). Thus, Josephus seems deliberately to omit any reference to slavery in his retelling of Ex 1:8–13, the biblical account of the Jews' national enslavement in Egypt.

Antiquities also omits the Israelites' yearning for slavery in Egypt in their speech at the Red Sea, but adds a reference to slavery in Moses's reply. Trapped between Pharaoh's advancing army and the Red Sea, the Israelites complain to Moses that he had brought them out of Egypt to die in the wilderness (Ex 14:11) and remark that they had begged him to let them remain in Egypt to serve the Egyptians (עבד) because it was better to serve the Egyptians (עבד) than to die in the wilderness (Ex 14:12). In LXX Exodus, which renders both instances of עבד with δουλεύω, the Israelites complain that it would have been better to serve the Egyptians as slaves. Moses exhorts the people not to fear, but to witness their salvation by God and be quiet (Ex 14:13–14). In *Antiquities*, by contrast, the Israelites, lacking weapons or provisions, see only the options of destruction or voluntary surrender to the Egyptians (παραδίδομι; *Ant.* 2.236). They accuse Moses, forget the signs of their liberation, and decide to hand themselves over to the Egyptians (παραδίδομι; *Ant.* 2.237). Josephus omits the Israelites' two references to slavery and may substitute παραδίδομι for each of the two occurrences of עבד/δουλεύω in Ex 14:11–12. *Antiquities'* five-section version of Moses's two-verse reply adds two references to

account of Sarah and Abraham's trip to Egypt, see Chapter 4 B2 174 f.

slavery. Confident that God would not now let the Egyptians destroy or enslave them (δουλεύω; *Ant.* 2.329), Moses encourages the Israelites to trust in God who has done all he had promised for their salvation and deliverance from slavery (ἡ ἀπαλλαγὴ τῆς δουλείας; *Ant.* 2.331). Moses's first mention of δουλεία (*Ant.* 2.329) refers to the possible outcome of an Israelite defeat on the battlefield, death or slavery, and not to the Jews' preceding servitude in Egypt.³⁵ An attentive reader might connect Moses's second reference to δουλεία to God's comment to Moses at the burning bush in *Ant.* 2.274, which is the only other mention of δουλεία in the *Antiquities'* narrative of events in Egypt; such a reader might understand the δουλεία as a metaphorical reference to the Jews' labors.

Josephus omits references to slavery in three speeches from outside the Pentateuch. After the death of Deborah, the Israelites fall under the control of the Midianites, who frequently raid them (*Jd* 6:1–6). When the Israelites cry out, God sends them a prophet who announces that God had brought them out of Egypt, out of the place of slavery (מִיַּד יְדֵי עֵצִי אוֹיְבוֹתָיִם/ἐξ οἴκου δουλείας; *Jd* 6:8) and that they must not worship the gods of the Amorites (*Jd* 6:7–10). Josephus describes the Israelites' suffering and reports that

35. In replacing the Song of the Sea from Exod 15:1–21 with a reference to hexameter verse composed by Moses (*Ant.* 2.346), Josephus notes that the Israelites celebrated their deliverance “now that the tyrants that would have enslaved them had perished” (τῶν ἀναγκάζοντων δουλεύειν διεφθαρμένων; *Ant.* 2.345; Thackeray, LCL). This circumstantial genitive absolute functions as a contrafactual, consistent with *Ant.* 2.329: the Egyptians *would have enslaved* the Israelites had they been victorious at the Red Sea. It does not refer to previous servitude in Egypt. Nodet also understands the phrase this way (Nodet, Cérif). Feldman, however, renders the phrase “those who were forcing them to be slaves” (Feldman, BJC), which is odd because the Egyptians were not forcing the Israelites to be slaves at the Red Sea and Josephus largely avoids mentioning the Jews' prior servitude. If Feldman is correct, however, *Ant.* 2.346 might contain an added reference to servitude not found in Exodus.

they turned to God, but omits the prophet and his speech (*Ant.* 5.210–212).³⁶

Antiquities also omits references to slavery in two speeches where the texts of the MT and LXX diverge. In his farewell speech at Shechem, Joshua summarizes Israelite history from the time of Terah, notes that God brought their forefathers out of Egypt,³⁷ and adjures them to put away foreign gods (Josh 24:1–15). The people reply that they would never forsake the Lord and serve other gods, and note that he brought them out of Egypt, the place of slavery (בֵּית עֲבָדִים) and performed great signs before them (Josh 24:17). The LXX lacks the nine words which describe Egypt as בֵּית עֲבָדִים and report God's signs.³⁸ Josephus compresses Joshua's speech, omitting reference to worship of foreign gods, and eliminates the people's reply, which mentions slavery in Egypt (*Ant.* 5.115–116).

In 1 Kings, after Solomon has constructed the temple, God warns him that he will cut off Israel from the land and reject the temple if Solomon and his offspring disobey the laws (1 Kg 9:6–7). "They" will say to passers-by that the people forsook the God who brought³⁹ their fathers out of Egypt (1 Kg 9:9); the LXX version adds ἐξ οἴκου δουλείας. Josephus expands God's one-verse warning (1 Kg 9:7) into two long sections,

36. The sole Qumran fragment of Judges 6 (4QJudg-a = 4Q49) omits vv. 7–10, as Begg notes. Begg is silent on the omission of slavery, but comments that the speech has no bearing on subsequent events (Begg 2005 50 n. 551).

37. Josh 24:6 uses Hifil יצא to describes how God brought their forefathers out of Egypt. Daube and Wijngaards each argue that Qal יצא is a technical term for "going out" from slavery, and Wijngaards notes that Hifil יצא refers to liberation from slavery (Daube 1963 31–32; Wijngaards 1965 92–93).

38. Butler suggests that the phrase in the MT might reflect "later insertion of traditional language" (Butler 1984 264), however Butler's proposed examples (Dt 6:22, 7:19) both mention אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתָם although Josh 24:17 has only אֱלֹהֵי. Neither verse in Deuteronomy mentions בֵּית עֲבָדִים. On the very complicated relationship between MT and LXX Joshua see Auld 2000.

39. Hifil יצא, see note 37 above.

mentioning wars, afflictions, and the destruction of the city (*Ant.* 8.127–128), but noting only that passers-by will find out the reasons for these misfortunes from the survivors as they confess their transgressions—thereby omitting mention of Egypt or slavery (*Ant.* 8.129).

With one exception,⁴⁰ Josephus’s description of Jewish law omits references to slavery found in legal sections of the Pentateuch. Several laws, particularly in Deuteronomy, mention Egypt and describe it as “the place of slavery” (בֵּית עֶבְדִּים). *Antiquities* mentions two of those laws, but omits both Egypt and בֵּית עֶבְדִּים. The first of the ten commandments in both Ex 20:2 and Dt 5:6 announces that the Lord is the God who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, בֵּית עֶבְדִּים, and that they should have no other gods. In *Ant.* 3.91, the first commandment omits Egypt and its characterization.

Moses describes the festival of unleavened bread twice: in Ex 12:15–20, which does not mention slavery, and again, after the Israelites depart Egypt, in Ex 13:3–8, when he directs the Israelites to remember that on that day they left Egypt, בֵּית עֶבְדִּים (Ex 13:3). Josephus describes the festival of unleavened bread (*Ant.* 2.136–317) after reporting the Israelites’ departure from Egypt (2.315) and explains that Jews celebrate unleavened bread in memory of the time of scarcity in the desert (2.317), but omits Ex 13:3’s reference to Egypt and slavery.

Several laws in Deuteronomy instruct the Israelites to remember that they were slaves in Egypt. Josephus describes four of these laws, but mentions slavery only in his

40. Josephus’s account of the Passover sacrifice in *Ant.* 2.348; see B1a page 289.

explanation of the Passover sacrifice.⁴¹ In Deuteronomy, the fourth commandment directs the Israelites to observe the Sabbath because they were slaves in Egypt (Dt 5:15).⁴² In *Ant.* 3.91, the fourth commandment omits Egypt and slavery. In Dt 15, Moses directs the Israelites to obey laws for remission of debts and manumission of slaves in the sabbatical year because they were slaves in Egypt (Dt 15:15). Josephus describes these laws twice, once in *Ant.* 3.282 and once in *Ant.* 4.274 in direct statement as though imitating Moses's speech in Deuteronomy.⁴³ Neither version mentions slavery.

Josephus combines the laws on gleaning from Lv 19 and Dt 24 with the penalty of lashing from Dt 25, but omits Dt 24's reference to slavery. Leviticus 19:9–10 directs an Israelite to leave gleanings in his field and to reserve fallen fruit in a vineyard for the poor and the stranger. Deuteronomy 24:19–22 specifies that unharvested grain, olives, and grapes should go to the stranger, widow, and orphan, and justifies this law by referring to servitude in Egypt (24:22). Deuteronomy 25:1–3, which follows next, defines 40 lashes as the penalty for the wrongful party in a civil dispute, but does not define for which disputes the penalty applies. In *Ant.* 4, Moses or the law, speaking in direct statement, stipulates that gleanings, olives and grapes go to the poor (4.231–232) and that autumn fruits and grapes go to the stranger (4.234–236). *Antiquities* 4.238 then specifies 40 lashes less one as punishment for anyone who violates these laws, because the guilty party, although free, has outraged (ὕβριζω) his dignity by showing himself a slave (δουλεύω) to profit. Because the Israelites suffered misfortunes in Egypt, it is good

41. See section B1a page 289 above.

42. Cf. Ex 20.8–11 which does not refer to Egypt.

43. *Ant.* 3.282 incorrectly assigns debt relief and manumission to a jubilee year, as Feldman notes (Feldman 2000 317 n. 854).

for them to show concern for others in a similar plight (*Ant.* 4.239). Josephus here links metaphorical slavery with hubris, the term he uses in place of slavery in his account of Ex 1 (*Ant.* 2.202), and omits Dt 24:22's reference to slavery in Egypt. He also links the penalty of lashing to the laws of Dt 24:19–21 and justifies the penalty by an invented reference to misfortunes, but not slavery, in Egypt.⁴⁴

Table 8 on page 310 summarizes the references to slavery in Pentateuchal law and corresponding passages in *Antiquities*.

(2) Individual Slaves in the Patriarchal Era

Josephus's evident concern not to depict the Jews' ancestors as slaves extends to his portrayals of individuals in the patriarchal period. Genesis depicts Esau and Jacob's secondary wives, Zilpah and Bilhah, as slaves, and describes Joseph's sale into slavery—which results in the Israelites' migration to Egypt. By contrast, Josephus omits two references to Esau's serving his brother, explicitly denies that Zilpah and Bilhah were slaves, and carefully presents Josephus as *not* a slave by nature. In an odd addition to Exodus, *Antiquities* has Pharaoh deride Moses as a slave.

(a) Moses as a Slave

In Exodus, Moses visits Pharaoh twice, once in Ex 5:1–5, which leads to greater hardships for the Israelites, and again in Ex 7:10–13, when Moses turns his rod into a snake. *Antiquities* 2.281–288 combines elements of these two meetings and adds Pharaoh's accusation, not found in Exodus, that Moses was a slave. After Moses describes the events on Mount Sinai (*Ant.* 2.283), Pharaoh jeers at Moses, and Moses

44. Levine comments on Josephus's addition of hubris here and its link with Egypt, but is silent on the omission of slavery (Levine 1993 78–79).

causes⁴⁵ Pharaoh to see the signs Moses had seen on Mount Sinai (*Ant.* 2.284). Pharaoh becomes enraged and calls Moses a wicked man who, having first fled from slavery (δουλεία) among the Egyptians, has now returned by deceit to try to terrify him with marvels and magic (*Ant.* 2.284).⁴⁶ A reader of *Antiquities* would immediately recognize that Pharaoh is intentionally lying. Josephus has already reported that Moses's father was noble (*Ant.* 2.210) and that Moses himself was intelligent (*Ant.* 2.229, 230, 244) and beautiful (*Ant.* 2.231). Moreover, Pharaoh's daughter had praised Moses's divine form and intelligence to Pharaoh himself and proposed that Moses inherit the throne (*Ant.* 2.232). Moses's noble lineage, intelligence and beauty demonstrate that he could not be a slave by nature.⁴⁷ Pharaoh's odd claim identifies him as a villain.

(b) Modified or Omitted References to Jews as Slaves in the Patriarchal Period

In Genesis, Esau is marked out to be a slave from before his birth. God predicts to Rebekah that she is bearing two nations and that the older will serve (עבד/δουλεύω) the younger (Gn 25:23). Isaac blesses Jacob by telling him that nations will serve him, and that he will be his brothers' master (Gn 27:29). Isaac blesses Esau by telling him that he has given all his brothers to Jacob as servants/slaves (עבד/δοῦλος; Gn 27:37) and that Esau too will serve/be a slave to Jacob (עבד/δουλεύω; Gn 27:40). Josephus does not refer to Esau's servitude in God's prediction to Rebekah—which Philo explains by identifying Esau as an Aristotelian slave by nature—and in Isaac's prayer for Jacob, but, strangely,

45. Or “offers to cause” Pharaoh to see the signs: Feldman, BJC; “causes”: Thackeray, LCL; Nodet, Cérif.

46. On Moses as a magician in Greco-Roman sources, see Gager 1972 134–161.

47. On virtue and intelligence as qualities that Aristotle notes define someone is *not* a slave by nature, see page 237 above.

mentions it in Isaac’s prayer for Esau. In *Ant.* 1.257, God tells Isaac that Rebekah’s younger twin son will have the advantage over the older one. When Isaac blesses Jacob, in *Ant.* 1.273, he prays that God grant Jacob a happy life and make him terrible to his enemies and beloved to his friends. *Antiquities*’ version of Isaac’s prayer for Esau, however, notes that he and his descendants will obtain glory through his physical strength, but that they will serve (δουλεύω) his brother (*Ant.* 1.275).⁴⁸

Alone among Jewish authors, Josephus denies that Zilpah and Bilhah were slaves.⁴⁹ Genesis 29–30 presents Zilpah and Bilhah as slave girls: they are, with one exception, $\eta\eta\eta\psi$ or $\eta\eta\eta$ in the Hebrew and consistently $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\acute{\iota}\sigma\kappa\eta$ in the LXX.⁵⁰ Josephus introduces Zilpah and Bilhah as Leah and Rachel’s $\theta\epsilon\rho\alpha\pi\alpha\iota\nu\acute{\iota}\delta\epsilon\varsigma$ (*Ant.* 1.303), an ambiguous term which can mean “attendants” or “slaves,” but immediately adds the qualification $\delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\alpha\iota \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu \omicron\upsilon\delta\alpha\mu\omega\varsigma \acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\tau\epsilon\tau\alpha\gamma\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\alpha\iota \delta\acute{\epsilon}$, “in no way slaves, but, subordinates” (*Ant.* 1.303).⁵¹ Zilpah and Bilhah are consistently $\theta\epsilon\rho\alpha\pi\alpha\iota\nu\acute{\iota}\delta\epsilon\varsigma$ in the sequel.⁵² Elsewhere, Josephus uses $\theta\epsilon\rho\alpha\pi\alpha\iota\nu\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ as a synonym for “slave.” Josephus presents the law of damages for a gored slave using $\delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ and $\theta\epsilon\rho\acute{\alpha}\pi\alpha\iota\nu\alpha$ (*Ant.* 4.282) where Ex 21:32 has $\eta\eta\eta\eta-\eta\eta\eta$ / $\pi\alpha\acute{\iota}\varsigma-\pi\alpha\iota\delta\acute{\iota}\sigma\kappa\eta$. *Antiquities* describes Hagar as Sarah’s $\theta\epsilon\rho\alpha\pi\alpha\iota\nu\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ when Sarah offers Hagar to Abraham (*Ant.* 1.187–188; cf. Gn 16.1-6: $\eta\eta\eta\psi$ /

48. Edom sometimes symbolizes Rome in Rabbinic literature, but this is not a feature of first-century CE sources. See Chapter 2 B3b page 105 and page 105 n. 186.

49. See Chapter 2 B3b page 106 f.

50. $\eta\eta\eta\psi$: Gn 30:3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 12, 18; 35:25, 26; $\eta\eta\eta$: Gn 30:3. See the discussion in Chapter 2 B1b page 86 f. The exception is Gn 37:2, which uses $\eta\psi\eta$ / $\gamma\upsilon\nu\acute{\eta}$.

51. The positions of $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ and $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ suggest that $\omicron\upsilon\delta\alpha\mu\omega\varsigma$ be read with $\delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\alpha\iota$, in contrast to $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\tau\epsilon\tau\alpha\gamma\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\alpha\iota$.

52. *Ant.* 1.305–306, 310, 335, 344; 2.181–182.

παιδίσκη), but Hagar is a δούλη when Sarah wants to drive her away (*Ant.* 1.215; cf. Gn 21.9-13: πῆξ/παιδίσκη). By explicitly denying that Zilpah and Bilhah are slaves, Josephus betrays a clear sensitivity to their status.

Josephus also seems keenly aware of the status difference between the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah, and the sons of Leah and Rachael. In the Hebrew Bible, only the father's willingness to accept a child as his own determines the child's status.⁵³ Moreover, a primary wife views the child of her servant as her own child:⁵⁴ when they are unable to conceive, Sarah and Rachel each encourage Abraham and Jacob, respectively, to procreate with their servants "so that I may bear a child through her" (Gn 16:2, Gn 30:3). Similarly, when Leah stops bearing children, she gives Zilpah to Jacob and is overjoyed when Zilpah bears two sons (Gn 30:9–13).⁵⁵ The lists of Jacob's descendants in Gn 35 and Gn 46 identify the children of Zilpah and Bilhah, noting either that Zilpah and Bilhah were the slaves of Rachel and Leah (Gn 35:25–26) or that Laban had given them to Jacob (Gn 46:18, 25), but consider the offspring of all four women to be Jacob's children without further distinguishing their status. By contrast, both of Josephus's versions of these two lists describe Jacob's children by Leah and Rachel as γνήσιοι, "belonging to the γένος" or "genuine," in contrast to the children of the θεραπαινίδες (*Ant.* 1.344; 2.181–182). Josephus may have in mind that Leah and Rachel each had a formal marriage (γάμος; *Ant.* 1.298–300, 301), but he may also be sensitive to the status of Zilpah and Bilhah, as *Ant.* 1.303 highlights, and thus to the status of their

53. Hezser 2005 194.

54. See also Hezser 2005 192.

55. When Leah gives birth to Issachar, she considers it a reward for having had Zilpah bear children by Jacob (Gn 30:18).

descendants. This is consistent with Josephus's extra-biblical proscription of marriage between slave and free, and his explanation that only the union of free men and women produce children with free minds who are directed towards virtue (*Ant.* 4.244–245).⁵⁶ Other post-biblical sources demonstrate a similar concern with the status of Zilpah and Bilhah's sons and their descendants.⁵⁷ Philo is well aware of Zilpah and Bilhah's sons' standing as νόθοι and that this might impugn the status of their offspring. *Joseph and Aseneth* makes their servile descent the cause of bitter animosity between the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah and their brothers. *LAB* even suggests that the descendants of Gad, Asher, Dan, and Naphtali had servile tendencies. Josephus avoids any similar complications by denying that Zilpah and Bilhah were slaves.

The story of Joseph, sold into slavery by his brothers then restored to his proper status by Pharaoh, foreshadows the Israelites' servitude in Egypt and their subsequent liberation, and constitutes nearly a quarter of Genesis. Josephus portrays Joseph as free by nature and frequently adds references to his virtue, intelligence, and noble birth using language that echoes Aristotle's account of natural slavery. Three Greek or Latin accounts of Jewish origins mention Joseph; Josephus's Roman audience might therefore have known of him.⁵⁸

56. See Chapter 6 B1 page 273 f.

57. See Chapter 2 B3b page 107 ff.

58. Apollonius Molon describes Joseph as the twelfth son of Abraham and the grandfather of Moses (*Eus P.E.* 9.19.3). Pompeius Trogus reports that Joseph was the youngest son of Israhel, Abraham's son, and that he was sold to foreign merchants who took him to Egypt (*ap. Just. Epit.* 36.6); that he foresaw barrenness in Egypt and recommended storing crops (36.9); and that Moses was his son. Chaeremon says that Joseph and Moses were both Egyptian sacred scribes (*Ap.* 1.292) and that they departed Egypt at the same time (*Ap.* 1.299).

Genesis 37:3 explains that Jacob loved Joseph more than his other children because he was the child of Jacob's old age. By contrast, *Ant.* 2.9 reports that, having fathered Joseph by Rachel, Jacob loved him because of the excellence or nobility of his body (ἡ τοῦ σώματος εὐγένεια), the virtue of his soul (ψυχῆς ἀρετή), and because he excelled the others in sagacity (φρόνησις).⁵⁹ These are the three qualities that identify someone who is *not* a slave by nature, according to Aristotle.⁶⁰

After selling Joseph (Gn 37:26–28 = *Ant.* 2.32–33), Joseph's brothers carry his bloodstained coat back to Jacob, who concludes that Joseph must have been eaten by a wild animal (Gn 37:33). In *Antiquities*, Joseph hears some news about Jacob before the brothers arrive (*Ant.* 2.36) and hopes that Jacob has perhaps been sold as a slave (ἀνδραποδίζω; *Ant.* 2.37).⁶¹ This echoes Aristotle's observation that no one considers a person, especially someone nobly-born (εὐγενής), to be a slave if he is captured in wartime and sold (*Pol.* I.6 1255a 25–26, 1255b 4–9, 12–15).

In Josephus's account, when Joseph reaches Egypt, Potiphar, Potiphar's wife, the jailer, and ultimately Pharaoh all recognize Joseph's innate nobility, virtue, and intelligence, which signifies that he is not a slave by nature.

59. Feldman and Nodet see Joseph's ἡ τοῦ σώματος εὐγένεια as an allusion to Rachel's beauty in *Ant.* 1.288, but that passage refers to her κάλλος not to εὐγένεια (Feldman 2000 132 n. 50; Nodet 2003 85 n. 1). Cf. Gn 39:6.

60. εὐγένεια: Arist. *Pol.* I.6 1255a 27, 33, 35, 40; ἀρετή: I.6 1255a 39, I.13 1260a 32, 35, 1260b 3; reason as λόγος: I.5 1254b 21–23, as διάνοια: I.2 1252a 32, as τὸ βουλευτικόν: I.13 1260a 12, as προαίρεσις: III.9 1260a 34. Niehoff notes Joseph's three special qualities, but does not connect them with Aristotle or natural slavery (Niehoff 1992 84). The sequel italicizes instances of these qualities. See page 237 above.

61. Josephus uses ἀνδραποδίζω nine other times; each instance refers to capture and sale into slavery (*Ant.* 14.20; 17.289; *War* 1.28, 80; 2.68; 3.62; 7.208; *Life* 84, 99). Less frequently, ἀνδραποδίζω can mean "kidnap" (LSJ s.v. ἀνδραποδίζω II). Here, Feldman and Nodet translate it as "sold as a slave;" Thackeray prefers "kidnapped."

In Gn 39:1–5 Potiphar buys Joseph, recognizes that God is with Joseph, and appoints Joseph overseer of his house (Gn 39:1–5). In *Antiquities*, Potiphar appears to recognize that Joseph is not really a slave: he gives him the education of a freeman (παιδεία... ἢ ἐλευθέρια) and allows him a better lifestyle than a slave’s (*Ant.* 2.39).⁶² Despite his change of fortune, Joseph maintains his virtue (ἀρετή) and demonstrates his reason or noble spirit (τὸ φρόνημα; *Ant.* 2.40).

Enticed by Joseph’s beauty, Potiphar’s wife unsuccessfully tries to seduce him (Gn 39:6–10) and then falsely accuses him of sexual assault, twice calling him a slave (Gn 39:11–19). In Josephus’s expanded account,⁶³ Potiphar’s wife notices Joseph’s beauty *and* his “dexterity in affairs,” i.e. his intelligence (*Ant.* 2.41). She assumes that Joseph would be pleased to be seduced by his mistress (*Ant.* 2.41), but errs in perceiving only the appearance of his servitude (δουλεία), not his character, which remains constant despite his change of fortune (*Ant.* 2.42).

Potiphar jails Joseph (Gn 39.20), but God gives Joseph favor in the eyes of the jailor, who puts Joseph in charge of the other prisoners (Gn 39:21–22). After interpreting the dream of Pharaoh’s cupbearer (Gn 40:5–13), Joseph explains that he had been kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews and done nothing to deserve imprisonment (Gn 40:15). In the *Antiquities*’ version, the jailor, perceiving Joseph’s diligence and

62. Thackeray translates παιδεία... ἢ ἐλευθέρια as “a liberal education.” Niehoff notes this mistranslation and observes that it was common for a Roman master to educate a talented slave (Niehoff 1992 104). Feldman, who translates the phrase as “the education that befits a free man,” thinks that Josephus has in mind the seven liberal arts (Feldman 2000 142 n. 135). Niehoff and Feldman fail to note the implication that Joseph is not a slave by nature.

63. The account in LXX Gn 39:6–19 has 344 words; the version in *Ant.* 2.41–59 has 838 words. See Feldman 1998b 369; Feldman 2000 144 n. 142.

faithfulness in performing his tasks, along with the dignity of his appearance, relaxes Joseph's bonds, and allows him a better lifestyle than the other prisoners (*Ant.* 2.61). Josephus interprets the cupbearer's dream and then announces that he is in prison on account of his virtue (*ἀρετή*) and prudence (*σωφροσύνη*; *Ant.* 2.69), not for a crime.

At the cupbearer's recommendation (Gn 41:12), Pharaoh sends for Joseph to interpret his dream (Gn 41:15–32). Joseph recommends that Pharaoh find a man of understanding and wisdom to avert the coming crises (Gn 41:33). Pharaoh concludes that no one is more understanding and wise than Joseph, puts him in charge of his court, and gives him a robe, signet, and gold chain (Gn 41:39–42). In Josephus's account, the cupbearer tells Pharaoh that, although Joseph had been fettered as a slave, Joseph said that he was one of the foremost among the Hebrews by descent and the reputation of his father (*Ant.* 2.78). Pharaoh notes his servant's comment that Joseph is the best and most sagacious (*σύνεσις*) person to interpret his dreams (*Ant.* 2.80). Pharaoh admires Joseph's interpretation, praises his judgement and wisdom (*φρόνησις...σοφία*; *Ant.* 2.87), appoints him a minister, and grants him a seal, chariot, and a purple robe (*Ant.* 2.90). Joseph's purple robe may signify his true status: in Rome purple stripes of various widths distinguished the status of senators, equestrians, and magistrates; ordinary citizens wore white togas.⁶⁴

Joseph marries Aseneth and fathers two boys, naming the second child "Ephraim," because God made him fertile in the land of his affliction (Gn 41:50–52). By contrast, *Ant.* 2.92 explains that "Ephraim" signifies "restored" because Joseph had been

64. Peterson 2009 200; For purple as a status marker, see Wilson 1924 49–55. The freedman Trimalchio's love of purple is sign of his obsession with free status (Petron. *Sat.* 30, 32, 38, 71, 78).

restored to the freedom of his ancestors (ἡ ἐλευθερία τῶν προγόνων).

Genesis ends with a one-line report of Joseph's death (Gn 50.26). The encomium in *Ant.* 2.198 comments that Joseph was wonderful in virtue (*ἀρετή*), administered all affairs with reason (*λογισμός*), and regulated his authority, which was the cause of his good fortune in Egypt, although he had arrived from a foreign land in unfortunate circumstances.

Antiquities consistently modifies the biblical account of Joseph, whom Josephus's Roman audience might have known, by adding references to his wisdom, intelligence, and noble birth to portray him, using the language of Aristotle, as not a slave by nature, just as Philo does.⁶⁵

C. *Against Apion*

Refuting slanderous accounts of the Jews' departure from Egypt which portray the Jews as Egyptian by origin is a central goal of *Against Apion*. However, none of the accounts of the exodus which Josephus presents mentions the Jews' servitude in Egypt,⁶⁶ although they all portray the Jews as diseased Egyptians. Given Josephus's reluctance to describe the Jews as slaves at important parts of the narrative in *Antiquities*, might Josephus have omitted any references to the Jews' servitude in the sources he describes? Apion's report that Moses ascended Mt Sinai, remained there for 40 days, and then gave the Jews their laws (*Ap.* 2.25) suggests that Apion or his sources were familiar with some Jewish traditions.⁶⁷ Apion's comment is one of only two references to Mt Sinai in extant

65. For Philo's portrayal of Joseph, see Chapter 2 B3b page 112 ff.

66. Manetho: *Ap.* 1.227–251; Chaeremon: 1.288–292; Lysimachus: 1.304–311; Apion: 2.10–32.

67. As Barclay also notes (Barclay 2007 181 n. 82). Gager speculates that Apion might

Greek and Latin literature.⁶⁸ Subsequently, Josephus recounts Apion's accusation that the Jews' servitude (δουλεύω) to one nation and then another proves that they do not have just laws or worship God properly (*Ap.* 2.125). The context clarifies that "slavery" here refers to political subjugation.⁶⁹ If Apion's knowledge of Jewish tradition extended to the story of the Jews' ancestors' servitude in Egypt, Josephus does not report it.

Joseph is the only character whom Genesis portrays as a slave who appears in *Against Apion*.⁷⁰ As in *Antiquities*, Josephus does not describe Joseph as a slave, but presents him as a captive to support the identification of the Hycsos with the Jews' ancestors, which underlies a central goal of Apion: proving that the Jews are not Egyptian by origin.

When no Egyptian can interpret Pharaoh's bad dreams (Gn 41:8), his cupbearer tells Pharaoh of the remarkable abilities of a Hebrew slave (עֶבְרָאִי/παῖς; Gn 41:12) who had correctly interpreted dreams in prison. Pharaoh sends for Joseph and tells Joseph of his dreams, which no one can interpret (Gn 41:14–15). In *Apion*, after presenting Manetho's account of the Hycsos (*Ap.* 1.75–90) and claiming that it proves the Jews' antiquity, Josephus reports that, in another book of his history, Manetho describes the shepherds as

have had access to the Septuagint (Gager 1972 124). Droge comments that Apion may have known Exodus (Droge 1996 137 n. 47) and Rajak thinks it likely that Apion "knew something of the Greek Exodus" (Rajak 2009 363). Josephus claims that Apion used Posidonius and Apollonius Molon as sources about Jewish worship and the temple (*Ap.* 2.79).

68. Cf. Pompeius Trogus *ap. Just. Epit.* 36.2.14.

69. *Ap.* 2.127–128, 132–133.

70. Joseph also appears in Chaeremon's account of the Jews departure from Egypt (*Ap.* 1.290, 299); see page 302 n. 58.

“captives” (αἰχμάλωτοι). Josephus then comments that it was not unreasonable for the Egyptians to describe the shepherds as captives because Joseph had described himself as a captive to the (un-named) Egyptian king (*Ap.* 1.92). However, neither Gn 41 nor *Antiquities* (*Ant.* 2.74–86) reports that Josephus described himself as a captive.⁷¹ Although depicting Joseph as a captive is unflattering, Josephus does so to underpin his claim that Manetho proved that the Jews were not originally Egyptian and does not present Joseph as a slave.⁷²

71. As Barclay also notes (Barclay 2007 61 n. 330).

72. Barclay also notes this omission (*idem*). An αἰχμάλωτος is a captive or a person taken prisoner, possibly in war (see LSJ s.v. αἰχμάλωτος). Although Romans often enslaved war captives, Josephus provides no context for his claim that Joseph was “a captive” so its precise meaning in this passage is unclear. In *Apion*, Josephus comments that he was a Roman captive (*Ap.* 1.48). See the discussion of Josephus’s captivity in Ch 8 page 325 f.

Table 7: Josephus's *Antiquities* on Jewish Political Subjugation to Foreign Powers as δουλεία

Foreign power	Josephus	Biblical parallel	Comment
Moabites	<i>Ant.</i> 5.185–87	Judg 3:12–14	Omits a reference
	<i>Ant.</i> 5.197–98	Judg 3:30; 4:2	Addition (thrice)
Canaanites	<i>Ant.</i> 5.198	Judg 4:1	Addition (twice)
Ammonites	<i>Ant.</i> 5.263	Judg 10:8; 11:32–33	Addition
	<i>Ant.</i> 6.69	1 Sam 11:1	Not an addition
Philistines	<i>Ant.</i> 6.21	1 Sam 7:3–4	Addition
Egyptians (during reign of Rehoboam)	<i>Ant.</i> 8.257	2 Chr 12:7–8	Not an addition
Assyrians	<i>Ant.</i> 10.15	2 Kgs 19:10–11	Addition
	<i>Ant.</i> 10.68	2 Chr 34:6–7	Addition
Babylonians	<i>Ant.</i> 10.33	2 Kgs 20:17–18; Isa 34:6–7	Addition
	<i>Ant.</i> 10.112–13	Jer 29:10–11	Addition or reference back to Jer 25:11; cf. 2 Chr 36:20
	<i>Ant.</i> 11.1–2	Ezra 1:1 or 1 Esd 2:1	Addition (twice)
	<i>Ant.</i> 13.301 (= <i>War</i> 1.70)	-	Addition or possibly copied from Nicolaus of Damascus
Persians	<i>Ant.</i> 11.300	-	Addition or possibly copied from Nicolaus of Damascus
	<i>Ant.</i> 15.386–87	-	
“Macedonians”	<i>Ant.</i> 12.434	-	Addition or possibly copied from Nicolaus of Damascus
	<i>Ant.</i> 13.1	-	
	<i>Ant.</i> 13.213	1 Macc 13:7–14:15	
	<i>Ant.</i> 15.386–87	-	
Rome	<i>Ant.</i> 20.166	-	

Table 8: References to Slavery in Pentateuchal Law and *Antiquities*

Slave Reference	Law	Pentateuch	Josephus	Slavery	Comment
בית עבדים	1st Commandment	Ex 20:2, Dt 5:6	<i>Ant.</i> 3.91	Omit	
	When you prosper, worship only God	Dt 6:12			No parallel in <i>Ant.</i>
	Conquest of Canaan	Dt 7:8			No parallel in <i>Ant.</i> Cf. <i>Ant.</i> 4.207: don't blaspheme other gods, cf. Ex 22:27
	Prophets and dream diviners	Dt 13:6			No parallel in <i>Ant.</i> Cf. <i>Ant.</i> 3.214: use of high priest's oracular stones
	Don't worship other gods	Dt 13:11			No parallel in <i>Ant.</i> Cf. <i>Ant.</i> 3.91 = 1st commandment
	Unleavened Bread	Ex 13:3, 14	<i>Ant.</i> 2.316–317	Omit	
עבד היה	4th Commandment: Sabbath	Dt 5:15	<i>Ant.</i> 3.91	Omit	
	Keep laws, answer children	Dt 6:21			No parallel in <i>Ant.</i>
	Remission of debts & manumission in sabbatical year	Dt 15:15	<i>Ant.</i> 3.282; 4.274	Omit	No parallel in <i>Ant.</i> Cf. <i>Ant.</i> 3: Jubilee year (in error), <i>Ant.</i> 4: sabbatical year.
	Passover sacrifice	Dt 16:12	<i>Ant.</i> 3.248	Include	
	Rights of stranger, orphan; pledge of widow	Dt 24:18			
	Gleaning, olive, grapes to stranger, orphan, widow	Dt 24:22	<i>Ant.</i> 4.231–239	Omit	<i>Ant.</i> substitutes poor for orphan, widow; adds penalty of lashing (Dt 25:1–3) and reference to Egypt
	If you obey...all good	Lv 26:13			No parallel in <i>Ant.</i>

Chapter 8 - Conclusions

Josephus clearly knew that his Roman audience thought that the Jews were Egyptian by origin.¹ Several Greek and Latin authors explicitly claim that the Jews were originally Egyptian, and some cite Jewish practices as proof. Diodorus Siculus, writing just before the imperial period, reports in *Library* book 1 that the Jews were Egyptian colonists, as their practice of circumcision demonstrates.² In *Library* book 34/35, the friends of Antiochus Sidetes claim that the Jews were originally Egyptians, although the king dismisses their report.³ In the Augustan era, Strabo repeatedly claimed that the Jews were originally Egyptians.⁴ Josephus's contemporaries Plutarch and Tacitus also report that the Jews were Egyptian by origins.⁵ Although Plutarch rejects this view, Tacitus links several supposedly Jewish customs to their Egyptian origin or to the circumstances of the Jews' migration from Egypt.⁶ Josephus's extended rebuttal of the "slanders" about the Jews in *Ap.* 1.219–2.244 presupposes that they all ascribe the Jews an Egyptian origin.

1. *Ant.* 2.177, page 203 f.; *Ant.* 14.118, page 195 f.; *Ap.* 2.289, page 212 f.

2. *Diod. Sic.* 1.28.2, 1.55.5; page 129 f.

3. Page 132 ff.

4. *Str.* 16.2.34, 17.2.5; *Ant.* 14.118; page 139 f.

5. *Plut. Is. et Os.* 31, page 127 f.; *Tac. Hist.* 5.3, page 141 ff.

6. *Tac. Hist.* 4.2–3, 5.1–3; page 143 ff. and Table 2 page 157.

Augustan propaganda depicted the civil war between Octavian and Antony as foreign war against Egypt⁷ and probably gave rise to the highly negative stereotypes of Egypt in first century CE Roman sources. Coinage and monuments also reminded Romans that Augustus had defeated a foreign power. Although Strabo could praise ancient Egypt for its government, ordered society, and wisdom,⁸ he also denigrated the licentiousness at Canopus and cited Polybius's view that Egyptians were unsuited to civic life.⁹ The Augustan poets Propertius and Vergil castigate Egypt as deceitful and licentious,¹⁰ and disparage the Egyptian practice of animal worship.¹¹ Roman authors contemporary with Josephus denigrate Egypt as licentious,¹² savage,¹³ vain, presumptuous,¹⁴ and superstitious,¹⁵ and frequently criticize Egyptian animal worship,¹⁶ which was well-known.

Josephus combats claims that the Jews were originally Egyptian to avoid associating the Jews with the much-derided Egyptians. This is explicit in *Antiquities* and *Apion. Jewish War*, a contemporary politico-military history, however, specifically declines to treat the Jews' ancient history, but in so doing describes the Jews' ancestors as migrants from Egypt, which, given ancient expectations that nations were either

7. Dio 50.4.4, 6.1; 51.19.1, 5; Plut. *Ant.* 60.1; page 165.

8. Str. 17.1.3, page 168.

9. Str. 17.1.12, page 169.

10. Prop. III.11, page 167.

11. Prop. III.11, page 167; Verg. *Aen.* 6.696–700; page 168.

12. Stat. *Silv.* 3.2.110–111; Tac. *Hist.* 1.11; page 170.

13. Luc. 8.827, page 169.

14. Plin. *Pan.* 31.3, page 170.

15. Tac. *Hist.* 1.11, page 170.

16. Luc. 8.832, page 169; Stat. *Silv.* 3.2.113; Juvenal 15.1–2; page 170.

autochthonous or founded by migration, might have convinced its audience that the Jews were Egyptian by origin.¹⁷ Yet, later in *War*, Josephus hesitates to link the Jews with Egyptians and makes a point of noting that the Jews of Alexandria were aligned with Alexander against the local Egyptians.¹⁸

Antiquities, which recounts the Jews' ancient history, demonstrates Josephus's familiarity with positive and negative tropes about Egypt. Josephus trades on positive stereotypes about Egypt by claiming that Egyptian records link Abraham to the remote past¹⁹ and commenting that they agree with Jewish records on many points.²⁰ Similarly, Josephus reports the extra-biblical tradition that Egyptian sacred scribes, who are skilled in predicting the future, foresaw the birth of Moses and predicted that he would exalt the Israelites and humble the Egyptians.²¹ Josephus was equally skilled at deploying anti-Egyptian stereotypes: the *Antiquities*' account of Ex 1:7–14 berates the Egyptians as effeminate, lazy, and pleasure loving.²² Josephus's portrayal of Abraham's visit to Egypt uses both positive and negative stereotypes by suggesting that the Egyptian priests' admiration of Abraham is important, but also noting that the Egyptians were ignorant of astronomy and mathematics.²³

Josephus explicitly denies that the Jews were originally Egyptian in *Antiquities* 2.177 and modifies or omits passages that might suggest otherwise. The proem of

17. *War* 1.17, page 186 ff. On ancient ethnography, see Chapter 3A page 115 ff.

18. *War* 2.487–488, page 171 f.

19. *Ant.* 1.170, page 172.

20. *Ant.* 8.155–159, page 173.

21. *Ant.* 2.205, page 173.

22. *Ant.* 2.201–202, page 176 f.

23. *Ant.* 1.161–168, page 175 f.

Antiquities echoes *War* 1.17's summary of what an *archaiologia* of the Jews would include, but carefully omits the comment that the Jews' ancestors migrated from Egypt.²⁴ To avoid implying that Moses was an Egyptian, *Ant.* 3.91 has Raguel's daughters describe him as a stranger rather than an Egyptian (cf. Ex 2:19). Josephus also modifies the second commandment: in *Ant.* 3.91 it prohibits worshiping images of animals—the much derided Egyptian practice—rather than images of anything (cf. Ex 20:5, Dt 5:6). Notably, Josephus omits the episode of the golden calf, probably because it would have struck his Roman audience as an obvious instance of Apis-worship. *Antiquities* also omits mention of the mixed multitude that left Egypt with the Israelites (Ex 12:38), perhaps to avoid suggesting that the Israelites and Egyptians interbred.

Against Apion also demonstrates Josephus's knowledge of tropes about Egyptians. When it is useful to his argument, Josephus praises Egyptian records as ancient and trustworthy.²⁵ However, he also denigrates Egyptians as stupid and petty,²⁶ suggests that mixing with Egyptian defiled the Macedonians in Alexandria,²⁷ and often berates Egyptian animal worship.²⁸

Josephus's careful use of *insinuatio* and keywords to refute charges that the Jews were originally Egyptian in *Against Apion* rather than openly stating in the proem that this was a primary goal of the work suggests that Josephus thought such claims were widely held and very damaging. Josephus's first witness to the Jews' antiquity, Manetho,

24. *Ant.* 1.6, page 196 f.

25. *Ap.* 1.8, 28, 70, 73, 215; 2.1; page 179 f. and page 179 n. 104.

26. *Ap.* 1.225–226, page 181.

27. *Ap.* 2.69–70, page 182.

28. *Ap.* 1.225, 254–255; 2.81, 85–87; page 180 f.

proves instead that the Jews were not Egyptian.²⁹ The long central section of Apion on “slanders” (*Ap.* 1.219–2.244) turns out on closer inspection to be an extended refutation of claims that the Jews were Egyptian by origin. Josephus openly announces his goal of disproving slanderous charges that the Jews were originally Egyptian only in *Apion*’s conclusion.³⁰

Josephus’s concern with disproving the evidently widespread belief that the Jews were Egyptian resembles the approach of the Book of Judith, which enlists Achior, a non-Jew, to convince Holofernes that the Jews are Chaldean, not Egyptian as Holofernes thinks.³¹ This contrasts sharply with the accounts of Artapanus and Philo, who present ambivalent depictions of the Jews’ connection to Egypt. Artapanus’s account of Abraham’s visit to Egypt clarifies that Jews were not Egyptians, but suggests that they had lived there since the remote past.³² Artapanus also makes Moses, and hence the Jews, central to Egyptian culture, including animal worship.³³ Philo’s *Life of Moses*, probably aimed a mixed audience of Jews and non-Jews, depicts Egypt as the Israelites’ second homeland and notes that they differed little from the natives.³⁴ Israelites and Egyptians lived on intimate terms: Philo notes that the “mixed multitude” of Ex 12:38 were the children of mixed marriages.³⁵ Philo’s repeated description of the Israelites as migrants from Egypt might have suggested to a non-Jewish audience that the Jews were

29. *Ap.* 1.73–105, page 218 f.

30. *Ap.* 2.289, page 212 ff.

31. *Jdt* 5–6, page 68 f.

32. *Artap.* 1, page 69 f.

33. *Artap.* 3, page 77 f.

34. Philo *Mos.* 1.35–36, page 71 f.

35. Philo *Mos.* 1.147, page 73.

Egyptians.³⁶ Philo also presents Moses as having two sets of parents, one natural and the other adopted.³⁷ Strikingly, Philo repeatedly describes the golden calf incident as an example of Apis worship.³⁸ As a resident of Alexandria and defender of the Jewish community there, Philo tries to present Egypt as a natural place for Jews to live, although they were not Egyptians. Josephus's motivations were very different and he devoted much effort to convincing his Roman audience that the Jews were not Egyptian.

The foundational account of the Jews' national origins in Genesis-Exodus centers on the Israelites' servitude in Egypt. God predicts that Abraham's descendants will be slaves in a foreign land for 400 years (Gn 15:13–14), the story of Joseph (Gn 37–50) foreshadows the prediction, and Ex 1:8–14 describes the prediction's fulfillment. The Israelites' servitude and their redemption is central to the identity of God, who describes himself in the first commandment as the one who took the Israelites out of Egypt, the place of slavery (בְּיַת עֲבָדִים; Ex 20:2, Dt 5:6). Moses justifies laws in Deuteronomy by reminding his audience that Egypt was the place of slavery³⁹ or that the Israelites were slaves in Egypt.⁴⁰ Moses even refers to slavery in Egypt as the justification for the laws: עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרָיִם is his catch-all answer to a child's query about any law (Dt 6.20).

Exodus 1:8–14 describes how the Israelites were subject to compulsory labor which it characterizes as “slavery.” Two first century sources, Philo and *Liber*

36. Philo *Mos.* 1.71, 147, 163, 220 etc.; page 73.

37. Philo *Mos.* 1.32–33, page 75 f.

38. Philo *Post.* 158; *Fug.* 90; *Ebr.* 95; *Mos.* 2.162, 270; *Spec.* 3.125; page 78 ff.

39. Dt 13:6, 11, page 88 f.

40. Dt 5:15; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22; page 89 f.

Antiquitatum Biblicarum,⁴¹ portray the Israelites as literal, chattel slaves. Philo depicts the Israelites as suppliants who went to Egypt seeking asylum, but who were enslaved like war-captives or home-born slaves in an impious violation of civilized norms.⁴² *LAB* reports that the Egyptian planned to seize Israelite female infants to use for slave breeding.⁴³

In addition to predicting that all of Abraham's descendants would be enslaved, Genesis describes individuals in the patriarchal period as slaves. God predicts that Esau will serve Jacob as a slave,⁴⁴ and Isaac's prayers for his sons note that Esau will be a slave.⁴⁵ Zilpah and Bilhah, the slaves of Jacob's wives,⁴⁶ bear his first four sons,⁴⁷ who become the founders of four of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the tradition remains cognizant of their partly servile origins.⁴⁸ Joseph, whose story foreshadows the Israelites' servitude in Egypt, is sold twice⁴⁹ and described as an עבד.⁵⁰

Josephus might well have known traditions about Ex 1 that understood the Israelites' servitude to be literal, chattel slavery⁵¹ and would certainly have known the

41. If *LAB* is a first century CE source; cf. Ilan 2009 *contra* the consensus view. See Chapter 2 B3a page 75 n. 100.

42. Philo *Mos.* 1.34–36, 142; page 101 ff.

43. *LAB* 9.1; page 103 ff.

44. Gn 25:23, page 85.

45. Gn 27:29, 37, 40; page 85 f.

46. Zilpah: Gn 30:9, 10, 12, 18; 35:26; Bilhah: Gn 30:3, 4, 7; 35:25; both: Gn 32:23; 33:1–2, 6; 35:25–26; page 86 f.

47. Gn 30:5–13, page 87 n. 135.

48. Gn 35:25–26, page 87.

49. Gn 37:27–28; 37:36; page 87 ff.

50. Gn 39:17, 19; 41:12 page 87 ff.

51. If *LAB* is a later compilation linked to rabbinic traditions (cf. Ilan 2009), Josephus might well have known versions of those traditions that may have circulated in the first

Genesis accounts of Esau, Zilpah and Bilhah, and Joseph. Given the centrality of the exodus story to Jewish history and self-identification, Josephus might have mentioned it frequently in *Antiquities* or referred to it in *Apion* or in descriptions of Passover in *War*. Josephus, who presents Joseph as unjustly enslaved and not a slave by nature, as does Philo, might have followed Philo and presented the Jews' national servitude in Egypt as a case of the unjust enslavement of a people who were free by nature. Instead, although he adds some references in *Antiquities* to the Jews' servitude in Egypt and frequently describes the Jews' political subjugation to foreign powers as δουλεία in *Antiquities* and *War*,⁵² he avoids mentioning the Jews' slavery in Egypt at important points in *Antiquities*, including his accounts of Gn 15 and Ex 1. He also explicitly denies in *Antiquities* that Zilpah and Bilhah were slaves. *War* mentions slavery in Egypt once in an aside and *Apion* never refers to it. Several factors may explain this evidence.

Deeply held prejudices against slaves and their defective characters would have made it problematic for Josephus to recount the Israelites' national servitude in Egypt and the servile status of individuals from the patriarchal period to his Roman audience.

Aristotle's account of natural slavery, whether it was accepted as a valid philosophical theory or simply reflected the self-serving worldview of slave-owners, seems to underly much Greek and Latin writing about the slavery of individuals and nations. Aristotle, who defines "nature" as those characteristics an entity possesses when

century CE. On the date of *LAB*, see page 75 n. 100.

52. See Table 7 page 309.

it is fully developed,⁵³ identifies some people as natural slaves,⁵⁴ who lack reason,⁵⁵ virtue,⁵⁶ and noble birth,⁵⁷ and for whom it is natural and just to be ruled by someone else.⁵⁸ Entire nations can be composed of natural slaves. For barbarians, who lack a ruling element,⁵⁹ are noble only within their own borders,⁶⁰ and are more servile by nature than Greeks,⁶¹ it is proper that they are ruled by Greeks.⁶² Aristotle suggests that his reasoning about individuals applies to nations as well: because the same things are best for individuals and communities, a nation must train for war in order to acquire despotic rule over nations who deserve to be enslaved.⁶³ This was perhaps more than a theoretical possibility: ancient sources mention ten slave nations, including the Helots who were well-known.⁶⁴

Roman sources echo Aristotle in positing that nations and individuals can be natural slaves, although “slavery” for nations is often a metaphor for political subjugation. Fragments of Cicero’s *Republic* 3 argue that, by nature, slaves lack reason

53. Arist. *Pol.* I.2 1252b32–33, page 234.

54. Arist. *Pol.* I.4 1254a13–15; I.5 1254b16–21; I.6 1255a30–31, 1255b4–5; page 235 ff.

55. Arist. *Pol.* I.5 1254b21–22; I.2 1252a31–32; I.13 1260a12–14; page 237 f.

56. Arist. *Pol.* I.6 1255a39; I.13 1260a34–36, 1260a31–33, 1260b3–4; page 237 f.

57. Arist. *Pol.* I.6 1255a27, 33, 35, 40; page 237 f.

58. Better to be ruled: Arist. *Pol.* I.5 1254b16–21; “beneficial and just:” I.5 1255a1–2; “natural and just:” I.6 1255b4–9; page 236 f.

59. Arist. *Pol.* I.2 1252b5–7, page 238.

60. Arist. *Pol.* I.6 1255a34–35, page 238.

61. Arist. *Pol.* III.14 1285a19–22, page 238.

62. Arist. *Pol.* I.2 1252b8–9, page 238.

63. Arist. *Pol.* VII.14 1333b37–1334a2, page 238 f.

64. See Table 3, page 159.

and are better ruled by a master;⁶⁵ Augustine, whose work transmits some of these fragments, comments that Cicero claims that slavery is useful for provincials.⁶⁶ Livy has a Roman commander comment that Syrians are a nation of slaves because of their servile natures.⁶⁷ Tacitus, Josephus's younger contemporary, writes of the servile sensibilities of the Treviri.⁶⁸ Dio Chrysostom appears to reflect Aristotle's comments on the naturally servile natures of barbarians when he notes that no Athenian can be a slave, nor any Thracian or Persian be free if brought "here."⁶⁹ Strabo and Plutarch are among the ancient authors who refer to specific slave nations.⁷⁰ Dionysius of Halicarnassus reports that Servius Tullius convinced patricians to accept his proposal to grant Roman citizenship to manumitted slaves by arguing that freeman do not differ from slaves by their nature,⁷¹ which suggests that Romans commonly thought that slaves *did* possess a different nature from free people. Dionysius comments that slaves in contemporary Rome were even worse: although slaves in Servius's time had good characters, he notes, modern slaves are criminals and an impure blot upon Rome.⁷² Bryson, who was active in Rome in the 60's CE, echoes Aristotle and explicitly describes natural slaves who lack virtue and intelligence and must therefore be ruled by others.⁷³ Dio Chrysostom's interlocutor in *Or.* 15 appears to prove Dio's remark that the mass of ignorant men

65. Cic. *Rep.* 3.37F1–2, 4; page 245 f.

66. Aug. *De civ. Dei* 19.21.2, page 240 f.

67. Livy 35.49.8, page 242 f.

68. Tac. *Hist.* 4.32, page 244 f.

69. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 15.16, page 243.

70. See Table 3, page 159.

71. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.23.1, page 246 f.

72. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.24.4–8, page 246 f.

73. Stob. *Flor.* 4.28.15.18–20, 24–25; Bry. 57; page 247 ff.

believe that all nobly born people are free and all ignobly born people are slaves.⁷⁴

It is a commonplace in Roman literature that slaves have a servile character or nature.⁷⁵ Statues can even capture a servile look.⁷⁶ Latin literature frequently disparages the bad character traits of slaves and depicts them as deceitful, thieving, greedy, filthy, and lazy.⁷⁷ Even the Stoics, who some scholars argue did not believe in natural slavery, view slaves as defectives who are better than a dog, but worse than a fellow citizen,⁷⁸ or are essentially bad.⁷⁹

The ideology of natural slavery was probably well-known to literate Jewish elites. Philo describes Esau as a natural slave⁸⁰ and notes that Joseph was not a natural slave.⁸¹ *Antiquities*' portrayal of Joseph emphasizes that he was not a slave by nature using the terminology and concepts of Aristotle.⁸² Josephus's invalid slave witness, banned from testimony because of his ignoble soul—an extra-biblical proscription—is an Aristotelian slave by nature.⁸³

Josephus probably also knew that ancient sources described entire nations of slaves: he refers to the special class of attendants that served the Spartans, but does not

74. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 15.31–32, page 256 f.

75. Sall. *Hist.* 3 F44; Tac. *Ann.* 14.44; Val. Max. 3.3 ext. 7; page 250 f.

76. Pliny *HN* 34.79, page 251.

77. Columella. *Rust. passim*; thieving: Plin. *HN* 33.26–27; wicked: Plin. *Ep.* 3.14.5; page 252 f.

78. Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 2.23.24, page 255.

79. Arr. *Epict. Ench.* 14.1, page 255.

80. Philo *Leg.* 3.89, page 105 f.

81. Philo *Ios.* 248, page 112 ff.

82. Chapter 7 B2b page 302.

83. *Ant.* 4.219, page 274 f.

identify the Helots by name.⁸⁴ Perhaps tellingly, Josephus cites letters in *Antiquities* which claim that the Jews and Lacedaemonians share kinship bonds and emphasizes in *Apion* that the Jews are more impressive than the Spartans, rather than noting the parallels between the Jews' national servitude and that of the Helots.⁸⁵

Although the accounts of individual Jewish slaves in Genesis and the exodus story of the Jews' servitude in Egypt take place in the remote past, the ideology of natural slavery holds that servile traits are transmitted biologically to offspring and persist in descendants, perhaps indefinitely. Aristotle notes that some people are marked out from the hour of their birth to rule and others to be ruled, which suggests that a servile nature is innate and inherited.⁸⁶ Tacitus's comments on child-rearing practices among the Germans suggests that a freeborn character is the product of nature not nurture.⁸⁷ Similarly, Suetonius's observation that Augustus's manumission reforms aimed to protect the Roman people from foreign and servile blood implies that servility is part of the slave's essence.⁸⁸ The same sort of logic also applies to nations. Aristotle's claim that barbarians lack a ruling element⁸⁹ and are more slavish than Greeks⁹⁰ suggests that these traits render them permanently servile.

The idea that a servile nature is inherited lies behind Josephus's extra-biblical

84. *Ap.* 2.229–230.

85. Kinship with the Spartans: Letter of Areios to Onias I, *Ant.* 12.225–28; cf. 1 Macc 12:20–23; Jonathan's letter to the Spartans, *Ant.* 13.166–70. Jews more impressive than the Lacedaemonians: *Ap.* 2.172, 226–228.

86. Arist. *Pol.* I.5 1254a 21–24, pages 235 f., 239.

87. Tac. *Germ.* 20.1, page 251.

88. Suet. *Aug.* 40.3, page 251.

89. Arist. *Pol.* I.2 1252b5–7, page 238.

90. Arist. *Pol.* III.14 1285a19–22, page 238.

prohibition against slave-free marriage in *Antiquities* 4. Josephus justifies this ban by commenting that only the union of a free man and woman yields children with free minds directed towards virtue.⁹¹ The same sort of concern may underlie Philo's comment that only a γνήσιος can be the "descendant of a citizen-soul" in contrast to a child who is an alien, an adoptee, or a νόθος.⁹² *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*'s version of events at the Red Sea in Ex 14 presupposes that the descendants of Zilpah and Bilhah's children had innately servile tendencies: only the tribes of Gad, Asher, Dan, and Naphtali recommend that the Israelites return to Egypt and serve the Egyptian as slaves.⁹³

The long-term inheritability of servile traits may also account for the ambivalence in Roman sources about Rome's partly servile origins in the asylum of Romulus. Although Livy and Plutarch report that Romulus welcomed slaves to his asylum on the Capitoline, Strabo, Ovid, Velleius Paterculus, and Florus omit mention of slaves at the asylum. Dionysius of Halicarnassus explicitly denies that Rome had servile origins and emphasizes that Romulus welcomed only free people to his asylum.⁹⁴ Sensitivity to Rome's servile origins appears to lie behind Juvenal's jibe at the Roman who traces his ancestors to the founding of Rome: he may descend from "an ill-fated asylum" and his first ancestor might be a shepherd or "something I would rather not mention."⁹⁵ Josephus might have known about this ambivalence towards Rome's partly servile origins via either Dionysius of Halicarnassus or another Greek author who

91. *Ant.* 4.244–245, page 273 f.

92. Philo *Mut.* 147; cf. Chapter 2 B3 page 109.

93. *LAB* 10.3, page 110.

94. Livy 1.8.6; Plut. *Rom.* 9.3, cf. 3.1, 7.1, 9.2; Strb. 5.3.2; Ov. *Fast.* 3.430; Vell. Pat. 1.8.5; Flor. 1.1.9; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.4.2, 2.15.3–4; See Chapter 6 A3 page 257 ff.

95. Juv. 8.272–275; tr. author, Ramsay, LCL; page 258 f.

referred to it.⁹⁶

If a servile nature was innate, it is unsurprising that manumission did not expunge it. It is a topos in Roman literature that freedmen have a servile nature⁹⁷ and that they are still “our slaves.”⁹⁸ For Tacitus, the impaired status of freedmen in a society is a proof of freedom.⁹⁹ The writings of Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny are full of invective against imperial freedmen from a previous era who undermined the social order by becoming more powerful than their social betters.¹⁰⁰ The taint of their servile origins limited the status of ordinary Roman freedmen who were barred from certain offices and from the legions although they became Roman citizens upon their manumission.¹⁰¹ Augustus’s manumission reforms, which created extra categories of non-citizen freedmen, may have aimed to address concerns about social order rather than concrete problems in manumission practice.¹⁰² The social stigma of servile origin could persist and taint the freeborn son of a freedman,¹⁰³ or be a useful barb even four generations later.¹⁰⁴

Given the pervasiveness of natural slavery ideology and the persistence of the

96. Attridge, for example, argues that Josephus knew Dionysius’ *Roman Antiquities* (Attridge 1976 43–66). Whitmarsh speculates that some Greek historians derided Rome for its partly servile origins; see page 258 n. 184.

97. Tac. *Ann.* 2.12, *Hist.* 2.92; 5.9; page 269.

98. Cic. *Mil.* 87, page 269.

99. Tac *Germ.* 25.3; cf. *Ann.* 14.39; page 267.

100. See Chapter 6 A5 page 266 ff.

101. See Chapter 6 A4 260 ff.

102. *Idem.*

103. Plin. *Ep.* 3.14; Hor. *Sat.* 1.6.6; page 270 f.

104. Suet *Aug.* 2. Antony taunted Augustus for having an ex-slave as a great-grandfather, page 271.

stain of servile origins, Josephus's Roman audience would probably have concluded that contemporary Jews possessed servile natures had they known the story of the Jews' 400 years of servitude in Egypt. The story of Jacob's progeny by Zilpah and Bilhah would also have been damning. A first-century CE Roman audience would have considered Zilpah and Bilhah's sons to be slaves, as the offspring of slave mothers.¹⁰⁵ Thus, as ambivalence to the story of Romulus's asylum suggests, a Roman reader might have concluded that some contemporary Jews were the tainted, direct descendants of slaves—unless they very carefully followed Josephus's subsequent accounts of the ten tribes's deportation by the Assyrians and the two tribes' deportation and return.¹⁰⁶ Josephus's familiarity with the ideology of slavery probably dissuaded him from recounting the Jews' servile origins to his Roman audience .

Another potential explanation is contemporary and more personal: Josephus's own capture and that of his friends in the Revolt, and the presence of Jewish captives and freedmen in Rome. Josephus's description of the siege of Jotapata twice specifies that the consequence of surrender to the Romans would be slavery.¹⁰⁷ After his surrender, Josephus describes himself as an *αἰχμάλωτος* and notes that he was thrown in chains.¹⁰⁸ Although a Roman commander could choose how to treat a foreign war captive,¹⁰⁹ the

105. The general principle in Roman law is that the child of a slave woman is a slave regardless of the status of the father, although there are some special cases. See Buckland 1908 397–401.

106. Ten tribes deported: *Ant* 9.277–280. Contrast between fates of ten tribes and two tribes: *Ant*. 10.183; 11.133.

107. *War* 3.357, 367.

108. *War* 3.400, 402, 408. On the meaning of *αἰχμάλωτος*, see page 308 n. 72.

109. Daube 1977 192. Titus allowed Jews who surrendered during the siege of Jerusalem

general rule was that a prisoner of war became a slave and the property of the Roman state.¹¹⁰ Josephus's careful description of his release from bonds suggests that he was very sensitive to the possible stigma of having been enslaved or thrown in chains as a captive. When Vespasian's position as emperor seems assured, he remembers Josephus, is shocked to learn that Josephus is still in bonds (*War* 4.624), and comments that it is shameful that Josephus should still be a war-captive in fetters (4.626). When Vespasian orders him released, Titus observes that it would be just for Josephus's disgrace to be removed with his irons and points out that Josephus will be like one never bound if they cut his chains instead of just removing them (4.628). The narrator helpfully explains that this is the method used to release those improperly bound in fetters (4.629). Someone cuts Josephus's chains with an axe, and Josephus receives his civil rights (ἐπιτιμία) as a reward for his predictions (4.629). Josephus's account clearly implies that he was unjustly fettered and that the chain-cutting ceremony returned him to his *status quo ante* as an ἐπίτιμος, a person with full rights.¹¹¹ As Daube notes, Josephus means that "his detention had not implied enslavement" and that his release did not make him a freedman.¹¹²

Josephus displays a similar concern with the status of the friends he saved from captivity after the fall of Jerusalem. With Titus's permission, Josephus entered the temple

to proceed elsewhere without enslaving the (*War* 5.422).

110. Buckland 1908 291–292; Buckland and Stein 1963 67; Watson 1987 19–20; du Plessis 2010 91.

111. Cf. Michel and Bauernfeind 1959 II.1: 234 n. 215.

112. du Plessis 2010 192. Michel and Bauernfeind suggest that Josephus has a *restitutio in integrum* in mind (Michel and Bauernfeind 1959 II.1: 236 n. 214). A *restitutio* nullified a variety of transactions and restored the parties to their former position (Buckland 1908 61, 210; du Plessis 2010 78). Schwartz comments that cutting the chains of a captive is "unknown in Roman practice" (Schwartz 1990 6 n. 123).

and found a crowd of captive women and children, 190 of whom he recognized as friends, and redeemed or saved them (*Life* 419). Josephus carefully notes that without their paying any ransom, he restored them to their former fortune (*idem*).¹¹³ Daube comments that Josephus has in mind *natalibus suis restituere*, which is a finding that someone who was thought to be a slave is really free and is returned to the status of a free person.¹¹⁴ Had Josephus or his friends paid for their release, his friends would have suffered a permanent blot on their status.¹¹⁵

Josephus may also have known Jewish slaves and freedmen in Rome. He reports that 97,000 Jews were taken captive in the war (*War* 6.420), and this would have included friends of Josephus, only some of whom he was able to save (*Life* 418–419). At least 700 of these captives were brought to Rome to march in Vespasian and Titus's triumph (*War* 7.118, 138), and others might have been taken to Rome as slaves.¹¹⁶ Given Cicero's suggestion that war captives could expect manumission after six years,¹¹⁷ some Jews enslaved during war might have been manumitted by the time Josephus was writing *Antiquities* and *Apion*. Josephus probably knew some Jewish slaves and freedmen in Rome, either because he knew them previously in Judea or because he may have been

113. The participle which describes the non-payment of ransom is (accusative) plural, which seems to make Josephus's friends the subject; so the Budé and BJC translations. The Loeb, followed by Daube 1977, makes Josephus the subject. Niese lists no textual variants.

114. Daube 1977 193.

115. Cf. Plut. *Luc.* 19.7 with Daube 1977 193.

116. See *War* 6.414–418. Of those captured after the fall of Jerusalem, Fronto selected some to appear in the triumph, some over the age of seventeen were sent to the mines in Egypt (cf. Michel and Bauernfeind 1959 II.2: 214 n. 246 and Diod. Sic. 3.12), others were delivered to the provinces for games, and those under seventeen were sold.

117. Cic. *Phil.* 8.32.

well-known in Rome.¹¹⁸

Given Josephus's evident sensitivity to his own and his friends' status as captives, and the presence of Jewish slaves and freedmen in Rome, Josephus may not have wanted to give his Roman audience the impression that the remote ancestors of contemporary Jews were also slaves.

Thus, Josephus, who knew that his Roman audience was ignorant of the exodus story, describes the Israelites' labors in Egypt in *Antiquities*, but omits their servitude in Egypt and references to it in biblical law, omits the servitude of Esau, denies that Zilpah and Bilhah were slaves, and presents Joseph as unjustly enslaved and not a slave by nature.

The results of this study lead to broader conclusions about how to read Josephus, questions about whether the idea that the Jews were originally Egyptian has left its mark in other evidence, and suggestions for modern readers of ancient texts.

This study highlights the importance of understanding the audiences, goals and genres of Josephus's works. The hypothesis that Josephus wrote all of his works for a primary Roman audience makes reasonable sense of the evidence he provides about his audience and the circumstances in which he wrote. It also explains Josephus's presentation of Jewish origins.

Identifying the genres and goals of Josephus's works must underlie any attempt to understand them. Almost by definition, they illuminate what Josephus is trying to

118. Goodman 1994, esp. 333.

accomplish in a given work and, just as importantly, what does not concern him. Putting it another way, all of Josephus's works are apologetic, but not all are *apologiai*. If *Jewish War*, for example, is *not* about the Jews' ancient history, tangential remarks about the Jews' origins may reveal Josephus's unguarded thoughts or reflect a standard, contemporary point of view. Josephus presents the Jews as migrants from Egypt in *War* 1.17, but in a different context, in *Ant.* 1.6 where Jewish origins are a central issue, he takes care not to give this impression. Sensitivity to the differing genres and goals of *Jewish War* and *Antiquities* highlights the possible significance of these sorts of details.

Reading Josephus with cognizance of his goals *requires* expecting and recognizing rhetoric. Josephus masterfully employs “the rhetoric of the moment:” the use of any argument or interpretation that serves his immediate purpose in a given context.¹¹⁹ It is not possible to understand Josephus's method without understanding both his local purpose in a given context *and* his global goals for a work.¹²⁰ Equally, Josephus's global and local goals illuminate his methods. Failing to understand both leads to confusion.¹²¹

119. For an excellent discussion of the tactical use of rhetoric, with the letters of Paul in view, see Mitchell 2010, esp. 3, 11–12, 21–27, 107–108.

120. *Contra* Cohen 1988 1 n. 1: “In this essay I am studying the *method* of the *Against Apion*; its *purpose* requires separate investigation” (emphasis added).

121. Cf. Cohen 1988 2–3: “Josephus then refutes a series of Egyptian writers (Manetho, Chaeremon, Lysimachus, and Apion) who give different versions of an anti-Jewish exodus story in which the Egyptians are righteous and the Jews are despicable. ...Josephus attacks the reliability of Greek historiography, but all of the writers whose works are criticized at length are Egyptian, not Greek, and this in spite of the fact that earlier in the work Josephus praises the accuracy of oriental writers in general and Egyptian writers in particular. ... These inconcinnities [others omitted: auth.] imply either that Josephus was a sloppy thinker, or that he failed to homogenize his sources, or that he revised the *Against Apion* several times and did not notice the roughness of the final product, or that he knowingly used some less-than-perfect arguments in his defense of what he took to be the truth.”

Josephus commonly employs several rhetorical “moves.” He often makes inconsistent claims. *Apion* 1.62 argues that the Jews’s forefathers did not pursue military schemes, but *Ap.* 1.75–76 (cf. *Ap.* 1.228) claims that the Hycsos, who invaded and laid waste to Egypt, were the Jews’ ancestors. The first claim explains why Greek historiography fails to mention the Jews, which is a local goal; the second explains that the Jews were not Egyptians, which is a global goal of *Apion*. Similarly, Josephus argues that Manetho is a reliable source (*Ap.* 1.73) when he deploys Manetho’s account of the Hycsos (*Ap.* 1.73), but claims Manetho is unreliable (*Ap.* 1.228–229) when his evidence conflicts with Josephus’s larger goal. *Apion* is Josephus’s most rhetorically sophisticated work, but *Antiquities* employes the same move. Josephus explicitly claims that the Jews are Mesopotamian by origin not Egyptians in *Ant.* 2.176–177, but cites Strabo’s report that the Jews were originally Egyptian in *Ant.* 14.114–118, when this helps explain the wealth Crassus finds in the temple (*Ant.* 14.110).

Josephus often professes to prove a specific point and then cites evidence which does no such thing. Josephus emphasizes in *Ant.* 2.176–177 that, against his inclination, he is listing the names of the seventy Israelites who went to Egypt with Jacob to demonstrate that the Jews were not Egyptian, but Mesopotamian. The ensuing “proof” establishes only that the list has seventy names, but does not address the origins of Jacob’s family. More transparently, Josephus supports his account of Abraham by citing Berossus who “mentions Abraham without naming him” (*Ant.* 1.158; Thackeray, LCL).

Josephus may also claim to be pursuing one goal when he is really pursuing a different one. The proem to *Apion* advertises that the work will answer slanders about the Jews’s antiquity (*Ap.* 1.2–5), but the conclusion clarifies that one of the work’s central goals (and the second of three) is refuting claims that the Jews were originally

Egyptian (*Ap.* 2.287). The introduction to the long middle section of *Apion* on the Jews' antiquity proves a different point: that they were Chaldean and not Egyptian or Phoenician (*Ap.* 1.69–73, cf 70–71). Similarly, Josephus cites Manetho as an Egyptian witness to the Jews' antiquity (*Ap.* 1.93), but he uses Manetho's evidence to prove that the Jews originated elsewhere (*Ap.* 1.104).

Lastly, Josephus omits material from his sources in one context that he might include in another. For example, Josephus repeatedly describes the Jews as subjected to δουλεία by a long list of nations (see Table 7 on page 309), but omits the exodus account of the collective “slavery” in Egypt.

Josephus is a creative author in control of his argument and his material, as all this demonstrates. Rhetorical moves such as these often highlight issues that Josephus finds sensitive or important. Understanding Josephus's concerns depends on identifying his local and global goals in the context of a work's genre, at the same time as recognizing his rhetoric.

Greek and Latin sources contemporary with Josephus evidently thought that the Jews were Egyptian by origin. Did this have any contemporary relevance? The evidence suggests that it did. Tacitus's and Suetonius's accounts of a ban on Jewish and Egyptian rites and subsequent expulsions closely link Jews and Egyptians.¹²² Josephus's account in *Ant.* 18.65–80 carefully assigns blame for the Egyptians' expulsion to lewd goings-on at the temple of Isis, thus playing on a negative trope about Egyptians and Egyptian religion, while blaming the Jews's expulsion on a rogue Jewish teacher (and his

122. Tac. *Ann.* 2.85; Suet. *Tib.* 36.

compatriots). If these accounts describe the same events,¹²³ it suggests that recent Roman history connected but did not conflate Jews and Egyptians. Josephus's denial that the Jews were originally Egyptian in *Ant.* 2.176–177 and the need to follow *Antiquities* with a separate work, *Apion*, devoted largely to the subtle but detailed refutation of claims that the Jews are Egyptian by origin, suggests that Josephus found these accusations present and prejudicial in late first century Rome. Is there corresponding evidence that Egyptians found the link distasteful or helpful? In his attack on Apion's claim that the Jews had Egyptian origins, Josephus comments that Egyptians fake kinship with the Jews either to share the Jews' good reputation or to discredit the Jews by association (*Ap.* 2.31). The point of the stories about Jewish origins by Manetho, Chaeremon, Lysimachus, and Apion seems to be that the Jews are *the wrong kind* of Egyptians (*Ap.* 1.227–2.32).¹²⁴ Might the idea that the Jews were some sort of (possibly degraded) Egyptians have left a trace in other evidence?

A modern reader, so remote from the mindset and assumptions of the ancients (no matter how close they feel) can attempt to overcome the chasm between her world and theirs by close reading of their texts.¹²⁵ But close reading requires being consciously both naive and knowing: naive in order to avoid unhelpfully and unconsciously attributing modern assumptions to the ancients, and knowing in order to remain aware that the reader is always being manipulated to further the writer's agenda.

123. See page 211 n. 68.

124. On these accounts and their possible Jewish elements, see the exchange between Gruen and Feldman (Gruen 1998b; Feldman 1998a).

125. “[M]uch of classical antiquity...is simultaneously uncannily familiar and completely unrecognizable” (Schwartz 2014 6).

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