
Apion, Roman Egypt, and the Insider-Outsider Problem

Was Apion, the first-century CE Homeric critic, ethnographer of Egypt, and eponymous target of Josephus, a Greek or an Egyptian? Asked another way, is Apion's work on Egypt and its peoples ethnographic or auto-ethnographic?¹ When he writes about Egypt, does he do so from the outside looking in, a so-called "etic" perspective; or does he offer a picture of Egypt from within, an emic account of a culture in which he is enmeshed?²

However frustrating, the answer to these either/or questions is "yes." In what follows, I will qualify this "yes." Emic/etic and ethnography/auto-ethnography binaries can be productive precisely because of their inadequacy. They cannot really do justice to texts written by Apion and others like him. It will become clear that the culture in which Apion is embedded and over which he claims authority has been hidden by anachronistic classical and pharaonic connotations of "Greek" and "Egyptian." As soon as the question of identity is posed on those terms, Apion's specific Egypt is lost. City-states like Alexandria and Naucratis, and the cultural traditions associated with them, turn into an inside "outside." In this spatialized rubric, when Apion gains expertise in Alexandrian intellectual culture, he turns

1. Dench (2013, 259–60) calls attention to the importance of auto-ethnographers like Manetho and Berossus, the standard examples of Greek-language historiography written by non-Greeks (on which see Dillery 2015).

2. The emic/etic heuristic (derived from phon-emic and phon-etic) has a long pedigree (for a summary see Headland, Pike, and Harris 1990). Pike (1967) first developed the pair for anthropology, to change an epistemological question of objectivity and subjectivity in ethnographic observation into a methodological question of interior (emic) versus exterior (etic) explanations of systems. Hall (2002, 44–45; 2003) and Tober (2017, 479–80 for "self-ethnography") use emic/etic as a frame for the ancient world.

Greek and leaves behind an “interior” perspective on Egypt. The peculiar and still lacunose dynamics of citizenship and status in Roman Egypt—the tripartite system of Roman citizenship, citizenship in a city, and general residency in Egypt—have exacerbated this over-schematized separation of insider and outsider perspectives on Egyptian culture. Greek and Egyptian traditions that had become indissociably intertwined are instead juxtaposed as alternatives that are respectively allotted to so-called “Greek cities” and to the rest of Egypt.³ An insider-outsider approach promotes a dichotomous image of culture that erases what makes the Egypt of Apion so fascinating.

WHO WAS APION? WHAT MAKES AN EGYPTIAN EGYPTIAN?

Choosing a label for Apion is not an idle matter. Apion scholars have had real difficulty naming Apion. Isidore Levy, Pieter van der Horst, and Hugo Willrich have defined their own work on Apion through this prism of identity, writing articles entitled “is Apion Alexandrian?” or “is Apion Egyptian?”⁴ Implicitly or explicitly, these questions of citizenship status entail a secondary attempt to frame his discourse on Egypt as Greek or Egyptian—whether he is an outside ethnographer or an inside auto-ethnographer. There is no way to discuss fully what Apion wrote about without appreciating the position from which he was writing about it.

Whatever the identity label, Apion cut a broad swath across the Mediterranean. He went on lecture tours around Greece and eventually moved to Rome, where he set up shop as a teacher and grammarian. Apparently, he knew how to market himself and was a shameless self-promoter. Even Aulus Gellius, the second-century Roman author of the wide-ranging, twenty-book-long *Attic Nights*, said that Apion was too loquacious: “Apion might perhaps be too talkative out of a wrongful passion for ostentatiousness—he is very much a seller of himself in publicizing his erudition.”⁵ Apion’s authority is *not* Gellius’s. Gellius’s text is a masterclass in how to perform reading and research, against which Apion’s proclivity to ostentation and self-promotion stands in such stark relief.⁶ In other words, Apion’s intellectual profile was outsized and splashy and not at all

3. The basic distinction between these three classes—Romans, Alexandrians and citizens of a “Greek city,” and *perigrini Aegyptii* (everybody else) is lucidly summarized in Jördens (2012). See Marotta (2017, 175) for a discussion of Apion and evaluation of Egyptians’ access to higher citizenship statuses. Bowman and Rathbone (1992, 113–14) contextualize issues of status against the backdrop of Roman administrative changes of the Ptolemaic system.

4. Levy (1900b, 188) (section VIII of Levy 1900a); van der Horst (2002, 207); Willrich (1895, 172).

5. Gell. NA 5.14.3 = BNJ 616 T 10a: fortassean vitio studioque ostentationis sit loquacior—est enim sane quam in praedicandis doctrinis sui venditor. Translations of Apion are my own; text is from Keyser (2015).

6. Howley (2018, 157–203) traces Gellius’s performance of reading and research, which is regularly contrasted with predecessors (like Pliny and Apion) whose methods he finds fault with.

“bookish.” He claimed to have summoned Homer’s ghost, which Pliny the Elder viewed with not unexpected suspicion.

Apion’s fantastic tales about Egypt circulated widely and were prone to hyperbole.⁷ The broad popularity of his work paved the path that he took toward Rome and fame. It also piqued the scorn of fellow thinkers like Pliny, Gellius, and Seneca, who all thought his successes were built on lies and pseudo-intellectual posturing. They gave Apion the nickname “Quarrelsome” (*Pleistoneikês*) to help make this point.⁸ Like Gellius, Pliny the Elder uses Apion’s brash personality—which even the emperor Tiberius criticized—as a foil against which to present his own modesty: “Indeed Apion the grammarian—whom Tiberius Caesar used to call the world’s cymbal, although he could come off as the drum of his own renown. . . .”⁹ Apion’s brand of intellectual display opened doors and alienated many.

Apion the Egyptian, Apion the Greek

Few people from antiquity disliked Apion quite as intensely as Josephus, who devoted a whole text, *Against Apion*, to tearing apart his reputation.¹⁰ Josephus remains, alongside Pliny, one of the best—though extremely biased—sources for Apion. The tension between Jews and Egyptians underlying Josephus’s polemic provides essential background for Apion and his work. Jewish and Egyptian authors wrote contrasting portraits of Moses and the Exodus: Egyptians claimed that Jews fleeing Egypt were in fact leprous Egyptians. Both Jews and Egyptians wrote these dueling portraits amid a larger quest for Roman support, which could only be secured at the other group’s expense. This competition for Roman favor helps explain Josephus’s insistently dichotomous view of Greek and Egyptian identities. To discredit Apion’s representation of Egypt’s Jews, Josephus attacks Apion’s claim to Greekness:

And why must one be amazed if Apion tells lies about our ancestors, saying that they were Egyptians by birth? *He himself made the opposite lie about himself! Born in the Oasis of Egypt, and, one might say, the first of all Egyptians, he swore off his true homeland and birth and, by falsely claiming to be from Alexandria, conceded the wickedness*

7. A complicating factor is that Pliny the Elder looms so large as an evaluator of Apion’s miraculous claims about Egypt and the natural world. His generally suspicious attitude to Apion’s claims, summed up by the terse and dismissive “incredible to say” (*incredibile dictu*), is discussed by Damon (2008, 350–51, and 2011) (cf. Manolaraki 2018).

8. Damon (2011) outlines Pliny’s, Seneca’s, and Josephus’s general suspicion toward Apion. Luke (2016, 290–92) notes Pliny the Elder’s low opinion of Apion’s scholarly method. His nickname “Quarrelsome” was confused for a patronymic in the Suda and later metamorphosed into “victor” (Πλειστονίκης), as Jacobson (1977) has discussed.

9. Plin. *HN* praef. 25 = *BNJ* 616 T 13: Apion quidem grammaticus—hic quem Tiberius Caesar cymbalum mundi vocabat, cum propriae famae tympanum potius videri posset.

10. Apion stands in here for the whole tradition of Aegyptiaca, which Josephus criticizes along similar lines. For Josephus’s characterization of Apion, see Jones (2005), and for the text generally see Barclay (1998) and Goodman (1999).

of his own birth. . . The high-born Apion seems to want to offer his slander of us Jews to the Alexandrians as a sort of payment for the citizenship given to him. He knows how they hate the Jews who live in Alexandria, and he makes a show of insulting them and looping in all the others, in both cases telling shameless lies.¹¹

The quote is a lot to digest. First and foremost, it is the evidence on which Apion's standard biography is based: Apion was an Egyptian by birth, later given Alexandrian citizenship. In this regard, Apion seems to have accomplished a rare feat. Ethnic Egyptians did not often attain Alexandrian citizenship, with its attendant privileges.¹² Jacoby's *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, the authoritative source for Apion's life and work, relies on Josephus for Apion's heading ("Apion von Oasis und Alexandria"). This double characterization—Apion of the Oasis and Alexandria—spatializes Apion's ethnic and cultural reinvention as a Greek. In this geographic scheme, inland Egypt becomes emblematic of Apion's former Egyptian identity, and Alexandria his newfound Greekness.

The Byzantine encyclopedia the *Suda* constructs an alternative biography for Apion that outlines the same entrance into Alexandrian culture. According to the *Suda*, Apion was born as a house-slave of the famously prolific Alexandrian scholar Didymus "Bronze Guts"—so called for the intestinal fortitude necessary to author the four thousand texts he reputedly wrote. Didymus first developed an intellectual persona rooted in Alexandria but presented squarely to Rome, thus creating a template that Apion and others would adopt.¹³ It remains uncertain whether Apion actually was a "house-slave" (*threptos*) or, as Cynthia Damon and others have suggested, was instead a "pupil."¹⁴ Either way, the same biographical trajectory takes root. Apion was born an Egyptian but made his way into Alexandria and its Greek intellectual milieu.

There are good reasons to link Apion's Alexandrian citizenship and his possible participation in Greek culture. The barriers to citizenship that were erected in Roman Egypt, but that Apion apparently skirted, were deliberately located in institutions like the gymnasium whose primary function was the transmission of Greek cultural knowledge. But this spatialization of culture and the particular way that it associates identity (Greekness) and place (Alexandria) is neither inevitable

11. Joseph. *Ap.* 2.28–9, 31–2 = *BNJ* 616 T 4a: αὐτὸς γὰρ περὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦναντίον ἐψεύδετο, καὶ γεγενημένος ἐν Οἴασει τῆς Αἰγύπτου, πάντων Αἰγυπτίων πρῶτος ὢν, ὡς ἂν εἶποι τις, τὴν μὲν ἀληθῆ πατρίδα καὶ τὸ γένος ἐξωμόσατο, Ἀλεξανδρεὺς δὲ εἶναι καταψευδόμενος ὁμολογεῖ τὴν μοχθηρίαν τοῦ γένους. . . For accessibility and economy, here and throughout I only print the italicized excerpts of extended Greek passages.

12. According to Delia (1991, 29, 56, 164), Apion was the *only* ethnic Egyptian to be awarded Alexandrian citizenship.

13. Didymus (*BNP* 4.396–8) was a prolific commentator and compiler of his predecessors' work, particularly that of the earlier librarian of Alexandria Aristarchus. For Didymus's place in the grammatical tradition, see Pfeiffer (1968, 274–79).

14. Damon (2008, 338).

nor inherently true. Josephus's spatialized strategy is designed to help him make a point: Apion's repudiation of his own identity helps explain his misguided slander of Jews. When this spatialized rubric of culture leaps from Josephus to Jacoby, from antiquity to modernity, one risks losing sight of just how tendentious this one-to-one matching of ethnicity and place is. It implies that different cultures in Egypt are sealed-off bubbles that can be discussed in isolation. This is particularly true for Alexandria, where it is easy to lose sight of a broader, multiethnic Alexandrian population when emphasizing the restrictions that barred many ethnic Greeks and Egyptians alike from citizenship. As a result, a falsely static vision of a Greek Alexandrian culture extends unchanged from the time of Callimachus or Theocritus for hundreds of years, into the early-imperial period.¹⁵

To Josephus, Apion's Alexandrian identity is secondary. At heart, Apion is an Egyptian. He uses the wordy periphrasis "being the first of all Egyptians" to ensure that the point comes across clearly.¹⁶ Apion may have illegitimately gained Alexandrian citizenship, but he is not *really* Alexandrian, because he is Egyptian. Josephus uses the tension of Greco-Egyptian identity as a tool by which to delegitimize Apion's reliability and skewer his betrayal of his own heritage. A common strategic ethnic fluidity practiced in Egypt becomes a type of "passing." Apion's Alexandrian citizenship is a disingenuous attempt to cover up his true self, which will always be tethered to his birth in the Oasis, an unimpeachably Egyptian part of Egypt. The language of betrayal imagines that ethnic identity is a zero-sum game. To become an Alexandrian citizen is to become more Greek; to become more Greek is to become less Egyptian.

Pliny the Elder, the wide-ranging encyclopedist and the other main source for Apion, also identifies Apion as an Egyptian by birth.¹⁷ In his section on beetles, Pliny cites Apion's allegorizing interpretation of the scarab beetle's importance in Egyptian theology: "The scarab beetle that rolls balls of dung. For this reason most of Egypt worships scarab beetles among the gods, in Apion's elaborate interpretation, in which he gathers that the labor of the sun is similar to this animal's, to make excuses for the rites of his own people."¹⁸ Labelling Apion's interpretation "elaborate" is far from complimentary. To Pliny, Apion's explanation is merely an attempt to smooth out Egyptian cultural practices to which he is tethered but for which he wants to provide a cross-cultural interpretation. This plays into Pliny's wider discrediting of Apion's scholarship. As Cynthia Damon has noted of Pliny and others, "their trenchant criticisms of the quality of his [Apion's] scholarship

15. Stephens (2003) has emphasized Egypt's impact on these poets.

16. Joseph. *Ap.* 2.29 = *BNJ* 616 T 4a: πάντων Αἰγυπτίων πρῶτος ὢν.

17. Damon (2011) catalogues Pliny's quotations and discussions of Apion.

18. Plin. *HN* 30.99 = *BNJ* 616 F 19: . . . scarabaeum, qui pilas voluit. propter hunc Aegypti magna pars scarabaeos inter numina colit, curiosa Apionis interpretatione, qua colligat solis operum similitudinem huic animali esse, ad excusandos gentis suae ritus. On this quote, and on Pliny's generally familiarizing portrait of Egypt, see Manolaraki (2018, 356–58).

may reflect chagrin at the flimsy foundation of so sparkling an edifice.”¹⁹ But among the general motivations for Pliny’s criticism of Apion discussed by Damon, I would like to underline just how central identity is to these critiques. Identity is reduced once again to a static and inescapable point of origin. It is the crucible with which to assay intellectual output.

As in Josephus, “birth” is the true source of one’s identity. Both Pliny and Josephus use the same root word—*genos* in Greek, *gens* in Latin—to denote the “people” to whom Apion is tied. This is a natural word for both authors to use. Its semantic range covers both people groups with a common descent and animal species.²⁰ The overlap between natural species and human community inbuilt into the term enables Josephus and Pliny to claim that Apion’s Egyptian identity is inalienable. Perhaps unsurprisingly, *genos* was instrumental in the later formulation of race.²¹ As in processes of racial identification, Josephus and Pliny use *genos* and *gens* to bind Apion to a people and suggest that this connection is immutable and essential. One’s birth is an ineluctable anchor that other markers of identity like language, education, or citizenship cannot erase.

But to many, Apion was a Greek.²² Seneca represents knowledge of Greek culture in the language of filiation: “Apion the grammarian, who under Gaius Caesar (Caligula) circulated throughout Greece and was adopted into the ranks of Homerists by all the towns.”²³ Knowledge of Homer allows Apion to be “adopted” into a realm of cultural expertise. Homer turns into an ersatz citizenship test that facilitates Apion’s movement within Greek spaces. As in Josephus, there is a coordination of identity and movement. But where Josephus sets out to delegitimize Apion’s Greekness and entrance into Alexandria, Seneca emphasizes his converse with Greek literature to explain his smooth circulation around mainland Greece. These assignations of Greek and Egyptian identities are not easy to reconcile or explain away. Pliny’s and Seneca’s different labels for Apion cannot be written off as the product of alternatively reliable and unreliable sources; Seneca was a closer contemporary of Apion than either Josephus or Pliny the Elder.

19. Damon (2008, 361).

20. Denoted by *LSJ*, s.v. γένος subsections III and V, respectively.

21. Race is the first definition of γένος offered in the *LSJ* and of *gens* in *Lewis and Short* and the chosen translation in the Loeb editions of Josephus’s *Against Apion* (Thackeray 1926, 303) and of Pliny’s *Natural History* (Jones 1963, 343). For γένος and (proto/early) racial thought, see Isaac (2006, 113–14) and McCoskey (2012, 29–31).

22. Other authors fall into this camp. For example, the Christian world-historian Julius Africanus (*Chron.* 70 = *BNJ* 616 T 3b), who studied in Alexandria and wrote in the late-second and early-third centuries CE, classes Apion among Greeks, together with Posidonius and Herodotus. He adds (*Praep. Eveng.* 10.10.16 = *BNJ* 616 T 3a) that Apion’s father was a certain other Ποσειδώνιος, which suggests a Greek ethnicity but could certainly mask mixed Greco-Egyptian ancestry.

23. Sen. *Ep.* 88.40 = *BNJ* 616 T 5a: Apion grammaticus, qui sub C. Caesare tota circumlocutus est Graecia et in nomen Homeri ab omnibus civitatibus adoptatus. . . .

Aulus Gellius puts it the most bluntly. He calls Apion a “Greek man” (*Graecus homo*, 7.8.1), defining Apion above all by his expertise in Greek literary culture. Before offering up the criticism of Apion’s ostentatiousness quoted above, Gellius explains his attribution of Greekness to Apion: “Apion, nicknamed ‘Quarrelsome,’ was a learned man endowed with a deep and varied knowledge of Greek culture. They say his books are famous, they recount a history of all the amazing things that are seen and heard in Egypt.”²⁴ As in Seneca, Apion’s mastery of Greek literature is a primary point of reference. Rather than his specific *bona fides* as a Homerist, Gellius prefers to note Apion’s knowledge of the broad categories denoted by “literature” (*litterae*) and “knowledge” (*scientia*). Gellius is an author whose cultural worldview is filtered through his bookishness, so this coordinated assignment of Greekness and erudition makes good sense. He often deploys these buzzwords. Versions of the phrase “gifted in wisdom/arts/authority” ripple across the *Attic Nights* and apply equally to Greeks and Romans: Herodes Atticus, Solon, Scipio Africanus, the Elder Pliny, and many others.²⁵

Beyond cultural fluency, the perspective Apion adopts toward Egypt is particularly important. Gellius segues from Apion’s general mastery of Greek culture to his representation of Egypt. By prefacing Apion’s Egyptian work with praise of his Greek erudition, Gellius suggests that the perspective through which Apion views Egypt supports, rather than undermines, his claims to Greekness. Apion’s Egypt is thoroughly exoticized and prone to exaggeration. Like Herodotus, the famous “father of lies,” Apion’s work was always perceived to play with the reasonable limits of veracity, a fact to which the putative title of Apion’s text, the “true history,” points.²⁶ Through this emphasis on unbelievability, Gellius implies that Apion’s work was Herodotean—an etic, outsider’s perspective on Egypt’s marvels solidly in the Greek historiographic vein. This Herodotean paradoxographic framework helps explain the tonal bivalence of Gellius’s description of Apion’s work. An attribution of wisdom and Greek cultural expertise (“gifted in the various matters of Greek knowledge”) gives way to a critique of Apion’s truth-bending ostentatiousness.²⁷

24. Gell. *NA* 5.14.1–2 = *BNJ* 616 T 10a: Apion, qui Plistonices appellatus est, litteris homo multis praeditus rerumque Graecarum plurima atque varia scientia fuit. eius libri non incelebres feruntur, quibus omnium ferme quae mirifica in Aegypto visuntur audiunturque historia comprehenditur.

25. This constant evaluation of others’ “learning” is well-discussed by Howley (2018, 118–19, regarding Pliny, and 204–52, regarding the reader as “expert on experts”). These phrases (*praeditus* with an ablative noun like *facundia*, *sapientia*, *artibus*, *auctoritate*) occur sixteen times in the *NA*. For these specific figures, see respectively 1.2.1, 2.12.2, 6.12.1, and 9.4.13.

26. Damon (2011, 142–44) (cf. Keyser 2015 *ad* T 13 for a more cautious interpretation of the title). The “father of lies” label comes from, but is never actually used in, Plutarch’s *On the Malice of Herodotus*. There, Plutarch catalogues Herodotus’s sustained, malicious belittlement of the Greeks and their accomplishments.

27. Howley (2018, 112–56) shows that Gellius criticizes the Elder Pliny in similar fashion.

Moving beyond Seneca and Gellius, Apion broadcast Greek identity by participating in a range of traditionally Greek intellectual domains. As the Suda's reference to Didymus makes clear, Apion fit comfortably in the line of Alexandrian grammarians who delved into the minutiae of Greek texts.²⁸ In fact, the label "grammarian" outpaces all other identity labels—Egyptian, Alexandrian, Greek—asccribed to him.²⁹ Within this broad tradition, Apion was particularly well known for his work on Homer. He wrote the *Homeric Glosses*, a text firmly in the tradition of the editions and commentaries on the Homeric corpus published by other Alexandrian grammarians.³⁰ This work must partially explain Seneca's anecdote that Apion went on a lecture tour of Greece in his capacity as a Homerist. The slippage between identity and intellectual authority comes into focus. Apion's status as a Greek or Egyptian is bound up in what he writes about—Homer, Exodus—and how he writes about it, whether as an Alexandrian textual critic or as a Herodotean-style storyteller.

38 CE and the Alexandria Issue

Apion's success as a grammarian points to a tension between Alexandrian as a citizenship status and Alexandrianism as an intellectual tradition. In the domain of social history, Diana Delia emphasizes that Apion was exceptional—an ethnic Egyptian given Alexandrian citizenship.³¹ But in the realm of intellectual culture, Apion's work on Homer is entirely typical of the Alexandrian grammatical tradition. A dissonance arises between Apion's exceptional citizenship status and very standard grammatical expertise, even as both Alexandrian identities facilitated Apion's move to Rome. It is especially difficult to resolve this tension between Apion's social and intellectual Alexandrian identities when the different authors who cite Apion—Josephus, Philo of Alexandria, Pliny—understand the label "Alexandrian" differently.

Apion's deputation to Rome on behalf of Alexandria provides some clarity when confronting these different valences of "Alexandrianism." Apion was chosen to represent Alexandrian Greeks after the anti-Jewish riots of 38 CE, which erupted when the Roman Prefect of Egypt Flaccus summarily denied Alexandrian Jews their long-established rights of Alexandrian citizenship and residency.³² In the

28. So says Suda α 3215, s.v. Ἀπίων = *BNJ* 616 T 1, which claims that he took over the position formerly held by Theon and that he was the student both of Apollonius son of Archibius and of Euphranor. For discussion of the apparent timing of this succession, see Damon (2008, 338–39).

29. He is called a grammarian by eight different sources (the Suda, Clement, Jerome, Seneca, Pliny the Elder, Julius Africanus, and Tatian); an Egyptian by three sources (Josephus, Clement, Pliny the Elder); a Greek by two sources (Gellius and Julius Africanus); and an Alexandrian by two (Athenaeus and Jerome, and technically Josephus as well).

30. The *Homeric Glosses* is collected and edited by Neitzel (1977).

31. Delia (1991, 29, 56, 164).

32. The most thorough discussion remains that of Gambetti (2009), whose analysis of the events is often at odds with Philo's version in the *in Flaccum*.

aftermath of this controversial edict and Alexandrians' violent enforcement of it, both Alexandrian Greeks and Jews sent delegations to Caligula to represent their side.³³ Alexandria's Jewish population chose the Greek-educated Jewish thinker Philo, and Alexandrian Greeks chose Apion. Whether chosen for the anti-Jewish sentiment apparent in his work or as a result of his recent Alexandrian citizenship, Apion's speech denigrating the case of Alexandrian Jews apparently hit the mark. Perhaps because Apion insinuated that Alexandrian Jews did not worship the cult of the imperial family, Caligula gave Philo an icy reception and soon dismissed him. As Philo bemoans in his *Legatio*, Caligula was busy with home renovations during their meeting. While Philo was making his case to restore Jews their rights, Caligula kept halting the meeting to choose colored glass and criticize room fittings.³⁴

Within the context of this riot, Apion became the face of Alexandrians for a Roman audience. As a citizen, Apion may have deviated from a normative definition of an Alexandrian. But in Rome, Apion was quite literally a representative Alexandrian. In other words, Apion should be the yardstick through which one measures what Alexandrianism looks like for Romans of the early first century CE. Apion's ability to move fluidly between Greek and Egyptian culture and his success as an ambassador to Caligula provide some clarity around just what constitutes an Alexandrian in the early-imperial period—both legally and culturally. The political upheaval that brought Jews, Alexandrians, and Egyptians into conflict for Roman favor forms the backdrop against which Josephus's dogged emphasis on Apion's aberrant and inauthentic Alexandrianism becomes intelligible. It is precisely the events of 38 CE that motivate Josephus's diatribe against Apion with which I opened. Josephus later makes explicit the irony of Apion's citizenship, given recent events in Alexandria. He juxtaposes Apion's own illegitimate claim to Alexandrian citizenship with the expropriation of Jews' entirely legitimate citizenship:

*If Apion swears off this type of honorary citizenship, let him stop calling himself an Alexandrian! Since he was, as I said before, born in the deepest depths of Egypt, how could he be an Alexandrian when honorary citizenship does not count, as he himself claims in our case. And yet it is the Egyptians alone that Romans, masters of the inhabited world, refuse to allow a share of any citizenship whatsoever. He is so noble that he claims to have a share of rights which he was prevented from possessing while attempting to sycophantically criticize those who have lawfully received them.*³⁵

33. Joseph. *AJ* 18, 257, 259–60 = *BNJ* 616 T 6. The circumstances of the riots are also laid out by Smallwood (1961, 11–24). She adheres to Philo's version of events much more closely than Gambetti (2009), who emphasizes Caligula's role in precipitating the violence.

34. Smallwood (1961, 24–27) summarizes the embassy. For Philo's complaint about Caligula's attention to contractors during their (main, second) meeting, see *Leg.* 358–59, 364.

35. Joseph. *Ap.* 2.41 (cf. Gambetti 2009 210): εἰ δὲ τοῦτον ἀφαιρέται τὸν τρόπον τῆς πολιτείας Ἀπίων, παυσάσθω λέγων αὐτὸν Ἀλεξανδρέα· γεννηθεὶς γάρ, ὡς προεῖπον, ἐν τῷ βαθυτάτῳ

In brief, Alexandrian status is as bitterly contested as it is ill-defined.³⁶ Josephus sets out to prove that Egyptians have no business claiming Alexandrian rights; that they are, as a group, uniquely disenfranchised within the Roman empire. The rationale for this emphasis on Apion's Egyptian origins and ill-gotten status is relatively clear, given Apion's popularity as a Hellenist. Josephus only feels compelled to make this argument because Apion was such a success as an ambassador to Caligula. He pulls out all the stops to discredit Apion because he feels the need to do so. But even laying aside these explanations of Josephus's motivations, the paucity of evidence and scholarly disagreement about the meaning of said evidence counsel caution: one should not rush to claim that Apion is an outlier against some other apparently widespread, but evidentiarily unavailable, definition of Alexandrian.

Nor should one assume that Romans—to whom Apion was first a literal, and then a cultural ambassador of Alexandria—cared much about the technical distinctions between an Alexandrian, a “townsman” (*astos*), a “demesman” (*dêmotês*), an “enrolled epebe” (*ephêbos*), and a “citizen” (*politês*) that Josephus and Philo discuss. To Alexandrian Jews, for whom these distinctions made a material difference in status and residency rights, these categories were extremely important. They were similarly important for citizens of Egypt's *poleis*, like Athenaeus. A citizen of the city Naucratis and a resident in Alexandria, Athenaeus is one of the few authors besides Josephus who specifies that Apion was an Alexandrian.³⁷ Athenaeus and Josephus, authors writing from a position within the Roman empire in which citizenship and status were precarious, are the exceptions that prove the rule.

Romans had a different perspective when navigating the lines separating Greek and Egyptian culture in Egypt. They could just as readily see Apion as an arbiter of Alexandrianism and the ways that Egyptian and Greek intellectual traditions there were co-constituted. There is little evidence that Romans like Pliny the Elder cared much about whether Apion had been an epebe or had a deme affiliation—that is, whether an asterisk should be placed on Apion's “honorary” citizenship. In fact, Pliny, like other Romans of the imperial period, rarely uses “Alexandrian” as an identity label at all.³⁸ In other words, Josephus's trenchant criticism reveals that the specific legal category of “Alexandrian” was of immense economic and social consequence in Egypt. But by the same token, Pliny's discussions of Apion reveal that this specific legal definition does not circumscribe the ways that Romans made

τῆς Αἰγύπτου πῶς ἂν Ἀλεξανδρεὺς εἶη τῆς κατὰ δόσιν πολιτείας, ὡς αὐτὸς ἐφ' ἡμῶν ἤξ(ωκεν, ἀναιρουμένης.

36. Delia (1991, 54) names only 273 secure attestations of Alexandrians listing a deme affiliation in Roman-Egyptian documentary evidence. “Alexandrian” *tout court* also occurs in documentary evidence, with uncertain meaning (El-Abbadī 1962 claims it was used interchangeably with a deme affiliation, though this interpretation remains heterodox).

37. Ath. *Deipn.* 1.29.16 = *BNJ* 616 T 4b, F 36.

38. Only once (*HN* 35.146), of Polemon.

sense of the label “Alexandrian” and the ways that ethnic Egyptians like Apion wielded it as they charted a path to Rome.

Muddying the Cultural Waters

Apion’s representation of Alexandria extended beyond his role as ambassador. Apion’s work in the *Homeric Glosses* shows that he also exemplified Alexandria’s intellectual culture. His close philological engagement with the Homeric corpus signals the claims he made to forms of Greek erudition long associated with the Alexandrian grammarians. He plays a number game commonly deployed in Greek symposia to broadcast learning.³⁹ As he observes, the opening word of the *Iliad*, μῆνιν, signals the total combined books of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*: “μ” represents the number forty, and “η” represents eight, providing in the first two letters the number 48.⁴⁰ To cement his status as an Alexandrian grammarian, Apion also gained fame (or at least notoriety) for the textual emendations that constitute the *Glosses*. So, for example, Apion emends the line “until in Ortygia the golden-throned sacred Artemis” into “until in sacred Ortygia the golden-throned Artemis,” changing “sacred” from a nominative modifier of Artemis into a dative modifier of Ortygia, presumably to better distribute the adjectives.⁴¹

Apion’s stature as a Homerist was prominent enough that even Josephus acknowledged it: “And concerning the poet Homer, though himself a grammarian, Apion wasn’t able to say with assurance what Homer’s homeland was; the same goes for Pythagoras, though he was born only yesterday and the day before.”⁴² Josephus’s remark has some bite. He uses the specific figures of Homer and Pythagoras as tools with which to undercut Apion’s claims to Greek cultural erudition via the hallowed term “grammarian.”⁴³ As in his earlier argument that Apion’s Alexandrian citizenship was ill-gotten, Josephus here implies that Apion’s knowledge of Greek intellectual culture is hollow and inauthentic. As a final flourish, Josephus

39. For examples of such number play, see Plut. *Quaest. Conv.* 9.5, 740e–f and the “Cattle Problem” discussed by Leventhal (2015).

40. On this number symbolism, see van der Horst (2002, 210). Seneca cites it as an example of the useless liberal arts that his addressee Lucilius ought to avoid.

41. Schol. *HPQ* 5.123 = *BNJ* 616 F 41: “ἦρος ἐν Ὀρτυγίῃ χρυσόθρονος Ἄρτεμις ἀγνή (*Od.* 5.123).” Ἀπίων τὸ “ἀγνή” περισιπᾷ κατὰ δοτικὴν, ἀκούων ἐν Ὀρτυγίῃ ἀγνή.

42. Joseph. *Ap.* 2.14 = *BNJ* 616 F 33: καὶ περὶ μὲν Ὀμήρου τοῦ ποιητοῦ γραμματικὸς ὢν αὐτὸς οὐκ ἂν ἔχοι τίς αὐτοῦ πατρίς ἐστι διαβεβαιωσάμενος εἰπεῖν, οὐδὲ περὶ Πυθαγόρου μόνον οὐκ ἔχθες καὶ πρώην γεγονότος. For the precise tenor of the phrase ἔχθες καὶ πρώην see Dillery (2003, 385).

43. Dillery (2003) cogently argues that Josephus felt the need to undermine Apion’s widely recognized reputation as a grammarian to fully rebut the latter’s representation of Jews in his *Aegyptiaca*. Dillery traces (385–88) all passages in which Josephus criticizes Apion’s status as grammarian (which occurs four times in the *Contra Apionem*, all in reference to Apion). Josephus’s ironizing use of “grammarian” not only satirizes Apion’s inability to date Homer, but also his reliance on disreputable sources for Moses (2.12, 14), his misdating of the Exodus (2.15), and his incorrect, Egyptian etymology of the term “sabatōn” (sabbath) (2.21).

makes a joke about the transmigration of souls to emphasize that Apion's ignorance of Pythagoras is even more unforgiveable, given the latter's never-ending rebirth into the world.

Josephus's critiques were designed to hit Apion where it would hurt. Apion actively promoted his privileged knowledge of Homer's biography. Pliny the Elder recalls a lecture that Apion gave when Pliny was a young man.⁴⁴ After discussing an herbal remedy, Apion pivoted to Homer: "(Apion) also said that he had summoned a ghost to insistently ask Homer where he was from and from which parents he was born, but that he did not dare to declare publicly what answer the ghost gave."⁴⁵ At first glance, Apion's ghost-conjuring is odd, to say the least.⁴⁶ To Pliny, it is proof that Apion, long considered prone to exaggeration, does not let scholarly rigor get in the way of self-promotion.⁴⁷ But Apion's interest in Homeric ghostly visitation has some precedent. Ennius, the progenitor of Latin epic poetry, famously proclaimed in his *Annales* that Homer's ghost visited him in a dream and told him the secret workings of the universe.⁴⁸ Relying on the Pythagorean transmigration of souls, Ennius claimed that, after a brief time as a peacock, Homer's soul passed on into him. Ghosts and the transmigration of Homer's soul allow a non-Greek, Ennius, to strengthen his apparent connection to Greek literary history through the language of reincarnation.⁴⁹ At least according to Pliny, Apion promoted similar avenues of access to Homer and the Greek cultural cachet he provided. Apion's ghost-summoning helps bolster an authority over Greek cultural history that his Egyptian origin risks undermining.

The ghostly summoning of Homer begins to reveal the interconnected evidence that different authors used to call Apion a Greek or Egyptian. Apion's work on Homer and on Egypt were not sealed off from each other.⁵⁰ He sometimes inserted

44. Here I follow the argument made by Dillery (2003, 385–87), that these passages from Josephus and Pliny “dovetail” (385).

45. Plin. *HN* 30.18 = *BNJ* 616 F 15: Apion prodiderit . . . seque evocasse umbras ad percunctandum Homerum, quam patria quibusque parentibus genitus esset, non tamen ausus profiteri, quid sibi respondisse diceret.

46. Dickie (2001, 207) connects it (and Apion) to a longer tradition of magical self-performance in the Roman provinces.

47. Pliny's scorn of Apion's self-promotion is Damon's (2011, 134–35) main point of emphasis in her reading of this anecdote. She is less attuned to the Ennian pedigree, which I am suggesting is necessary context for Apion's claims to be a Homerist despite his Egyptian background.

48. Skutsch (1985) places the dream relatively early in the *Annales*, at 1.iii–x, with the peacock transformation at ix. For later authors who mentioned the dream and its Pythagorean underpinning, see Skutsch (1985, 147–67). Ennius's southern Italian origins are often invoked to explain his interest in Pythagoreanism, given Pythagoras's connections to Croton (on which Diog. Laert. 8.3).

49. The general role of Pythagoreanism here has been debated. Aicher (1989, 230–31) sees Pythagorean metempsychosis as metaphor for and defense of the efficacy of stylistic translation between Greek and Latin. Delatte (1915, 109) has drawn on the importance of Homer for Pythagoreans. Skutsch (1968, 6–9) provides earlier models of literary-philosophical soul transmigration.

50. This is partially demonstrated by Josephus's critiques of Apion's work on Egypt, which necessarily includes Josephus's delegitimization of Apion's expertise as a Greek-language glossator

flags of his own Egyptian identity into his interpretations of Homer. According to the Homeric commentator Eustathius, Apion insisted that the Elysian fields and isles of the blessed mentioned in the *Odyssey* were located not in the far West, but in the Egyptian Delta, around the Canopic branch of the Nile. Apion's justification lies in a traditionally Greek etymological expertise: he derives Elysian from ἰλύς, the word for alluvial soil long connected with the Nile inundation.⁵¹ In this instance, typically Alexandrian grammatical knowledge is invoked to serve an Egyptian-centric reinterpretation of Homer. Apion's etymology of Elysium is the tip of the iceberg. Apion was a prolific etymologizer. As Susanne Neitzel has emphasized, the interpretations one sees in the *Homeric Glosses* were as influential as they were roundly criticized by fellow grammarians.⁵²

Besides Homer, Apion also uses medicine to insinuate Egypt into the domain of Greek culture. The herbology lecture that Pliny heard provides a good example: "When in my adolescence I saw Apion the grammarian assert that *cynocephalia* ('dog-head'), which in Egypt is called 'osiritis,' was a divine herb effective against all poison. If the whole plant is uprooted, he claimed that he who uprooted it would die immediately."⁵³ Apion first gives two names for the same plant and then makes fantastic claims about the properties of said plant. The gloss *osiritis* is revealing, in two directions. Methodologically, it points up a difficulty inherent in authors who have been indirectly preserved. It is unclear whether this gloss of *cynocephalia* as *osiritis* is an interpolation that Pliny himself is making—whether this coordination belongs to Pliny the Elder—or whether one can include it in the broad "assertion" that Pliny is attributing to Apion.⁵⁴ Here, certainty is never guaranteed. Arguing fervently for one or the other option would inevitably hit a dead end. I would instead emphasize that Pliny is looping Apion in on a cross-cultural translation that is, in important ways, co-authored by them both. This model of co-authorship is one I will return to in coming chapters when facing this slippage of authority between cited and citing author.

Beyond exemplifying a methodological challenge, this translation is significant on its own grounds. Through *osiritis*, Apion, and by extension the citing author Pliny, demonstrate their ability to move between Greek and Egyptian terminology. Apion offers both Greek and Egyptian words for the same plant, thus using

(by emphasizing, per Dillery (2003, 389–90), Apion's "deviant" and "idiosyncratic" interpretations in the *Homeric Glosses*).

51. Eust. *Od.* 4.563 = *BNJ* 616 F 11a. Damon (2008, 350n45) reveals that this is, as is typical of Apion, idiosyncratic. Elysian was more typically derived from "lightning-struck" (ἐνηλύσιος).

52. Neitzel (1977, 208). Josephus (*Ap.* 2.3) calls him a "crowd pleaser" (ὄχλαγωγός). Neitzel (1977, 207–9) and Damon (2008, 344–47) make clear that other etymologizers of Homer like Apollonius single out Apion's interpretation and either explicitly (κακῶς) or implicitly (ὁ δὲ Ἀπίων) criticize it.

53. Plin. *HN* 30.18 = *BNJ* 616 F 15: . . . cum adulescentibus nobis visus Apion grammaticae artis prouiderit cynocephalian herbam, quae in Aegypto vocaretur osiritis, diuinam et contra omnia veneficia; sed si tota erueretur, statim eum, qui eruisset, mori . . .

54. Keyser (2016, 455) tries to reconstruct Apion's original pharmacological work from Pliny's obviously tendentious citations of Apion's tall tales.

translation to bolster his authority, which spans the Greek and the Egyptian. Interestingly, Apion and Pliny claim that *cynocephalia* and *osiritis* belong to separate languages, even as both are denoted in Latin in Pliny's text. The gloss gestures to multilingualism while remaining monolingual.⁵⁵ This sneakily complicated use of language thus relies on a distinction between the semantics of transliterated (*osiritis*) and translated (*cynocephalia*) terms to carve out authorial cachet. Beyond the literal translation it offers, the reference to Osiris in the name *osiritis* opens up much broader processes of cultural equivalence-drawing that tie together Egyptian religion, Greek and Egyptian pharmacology, and botany.⁵⁶ Through one plant, one can broach much larger issues of how cultural translation of intellectual traditions is undertaken, the socio-economic motivations that frame these translations, and the questions of authority that culturally "in between" figures like Apion pose.

Apion's fragmentary status is of course frustrating; the basic features of Apion's work, its narrative texture, remain out of reach. The questions of attribution—are the *osiritis* gloss Pliny's or Apion's?—are as aporetic as they are unavoidable. On a more basic level, it makes Apion harder to find. The difficulty of access to the places where citations and quotations of Apion are compiled has hindered work on a literary tradition that defies generic labels and moves fluidly between Greek and Egyptian domains of expertise. This material is collected in editions of fragmentary authors that are necessarily imperfect and often cost-prohibitive.⁵⁷ These different editions carve Apion into distinct component parts in ways that necessarily mask the cultural cross-pollinating that mixes together Egyptian and Greek traditions. Apion's work is bifurcated and presented both in the *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (for his work on Egypt) and in Neitzel's *Apions Glossai Homerikai* (for his activity as grammarian).⁵⁸ The task of collecting fragmentary authors and creating generic canons through which they are lumped together is fraught with difficulty. The editors of such collections have expressed well the inevitable limitations of this process.⁵⁹ As a result, one loses sight of Apion.

55. There remain two potential complications: first, that the phrase "is called in Egypt" refers to a Greek-language Egyptian regionalism; second, that Apion would have originally denoted the plant with its actual Egyptian name. I find these two options less likely. To the first, the syntax seems to replicate the lingual equivalence-drawing one sees in Herodotus; second, there is very little evidence for direct translation between Egyptian and Latin that does not pass through a Greek intermediary.

56. For evidence on the Osiris-poison connection in Demotic magical papyri, see column xix.10 (text published by Griffith and Thompson 1921), an anti-poison spell that invokes the cup of Osiris (*p w n nb n Wsr*). See also the plant poultices in column xiv.22, which mentions an Anubis-plant. The Crocodilopolis manual P. Vindob. D. 6257 (with Reymond 1976, 39) offers similar evidence of translation between Greek and Egyptian pharmacology.

57. Most (1997) grapples with this imperfection. Among the contributions, Bowersock (1997) is aptosite, since he uses case studies from Jacoby's *FGrHist* to discuss the limits of fragmentary framing.

58. Keyser (2015) (the update of the original *FGrHist* 616) and Neitzel (1977), respectively.

59. Schepens (1997) summarizes the editorial process to discuss the necessary imperfections of the historiographic and nationalist (*genos*-based) approach that Jacoby took.

But difficulty of access notwithstanding, the methodological questions necessitated by indirect transmission have long deserved answers. Focalizing Apion through the network of different Greek and Roman authors who cite him illustrates just how unstable and flexible the relationship between ethnic identity and literary production is. The perspective of the observer, their own motivations and cultural position, provides essential context for the way they represent Apion. When assigning an identity to Apion, citing authors differently hierarchize his place of origin, citizenship, cultural expertise, or language. To the Elder Pliny, a first-century CE Roman and near contemporary, Apion was, in spite of his *interpretatio Graeca*, an Egyptian by “birth” (*gens*). To Josephus too, another chronologically proximate source, Apion is Egyptian, regardless of citizenship. But to Aulus Gellius, Seneca, and more chronologically far-flung authors like Julius Africanus, Apion was a Greek, defined as such by his conversance with the fundamentals of Greek intellectual culture. His work on Homer and his seemingly etic, Herodotean representation of Egypt mount a case for a Greek identity label. The different components of identity (place of birth, religious affiliation, intellectual output) are contestable, and unable to be collapsed into a single “Egyptian” or “Greek” standpoint.

APION AND AEGYPTIACA UNDER MANETHO’S LONG SHADOW

A tacit bias underlies all of this. To many modern readers, Apion is not *really* Egyptian. *Osiritis* notwithstanding, there is not enough in Apion’s work that looks like what Egyptologists actually study. It does not help Apion’s case that there is a ready point of comparison who overshadows him. Manetho remains the paradigmatic model of an Egyptian who wrote about Egypt for Greeks (if not yet Romans).⁶⁰ Occupying a privileged position as a Heliopolitan priest in the early third century BCE, Manetho wrote the “Egyptian Matters” (*Aegyptiaca*), which presents a dynastic history of Egypt. His text, which lists Egyptian kings and lumps them into a set of dynasties, is indebted to Egypt’s historiographic traditions of “annals” (*gnwt*) and “accomplishments” (*nhtw*) and evidences a clear continuity with other, much earlier kings lists.⁶¹ Manetho’s text is similar in form to canonical pharaonic-era annals like the Palermo Stone, the Abydos King List, and the Turin Royal Canon.⁶²

An expertise in this type of Egyptian historical memory was just one component of Manetho’s authoritative Egyptian intellectual identity. He also garnered religious *bona fides* through his connections to Heliopolis (Egyptian *jwnw*), a predynastic

60. So, for example, Dench (2013, 259–60) cites Manetho and Berossus as the clear examples of auto-ethnographic writing. They are discussed in the same vein in Dillery (1999, 112, and 2015).

61. For *gnwt*, see Redford (1984, 65–96); for *nhtw*, see Galán (1995, 41–100).

62. The broader tradition of the kings list and Manetho’s connections thereto are laid out in Redford (1986, 201–30). Wilkinson (2000) deals specifically with the Palermo Stone, and Ryholt (2004) with the Turin Royal Canon.

site, Old-Kingdom cult center for Atum, and the birthplace of Egypt's solar religion. Beyond Heliopolis, testimonia speak to Manetho's general access to temples and their libraries. His ability to publicize in Greek information that otherwise resided in gated-off repositories of pharaonic knowledge became a primary point of reference for Greeks and Romans discussing his work. Thus, Manetho and his Babylonian contemporary Berossus have come to fossilize a set auto-ethnographic pattern: Manetho and Berossus translated Egyptian and Babylonian knowledge traditions into Greek. They did so under the shadow of newly arrived Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasts who increasingly leveraged these knowledge traditions for their own benefit.⁶³ Even when translated into Greek, Manetho is still working within a recognizably Egyptian vein.

Through his Greek-language, yet unambiguously Egyptian text, Manetho thrust emic, consummately "insider" auto-ethnography into the Greek-language discourse on Egypt. Manethonian scholarship—particularly the work of Ian Moyer and John Dillery—has debated just what position Manetho takes in relation to Egyptian and Greek discourses on Egypt and its past. They have asked whether Manetho replicates the hallmarks of a Greek, Herodotean tradition against which he is largely positioning his own text.⁶⁴ But this debate aside, he nonetheless possesses an Egyptian authority vouchsafed by his access to, and mastery over, pharaonic-Egyptian knowledge. On this Dillery and Moyer agree. Manetho knows, can represent, and can translate Egyptian written in hieroglyphic; his *Aegyptiaca* delves into Egyptian literary forms like the "king's novel" and hymns.⁶⁵

The modern disciplinary importance of Manetho's text is itself significant. His kings list is essential to the reconstruction of pharaonic history; his dynastic organization is still used today. Manetho's importance to Egyptology operates as a circular, ex post facto imprimatur of legitimate Egyptianness: Egyptians are the people studied by Egyptologists.⁶⁶ However many problems there are in his dynastic organization—and anybody interested in the political history of the First Intermediate Period can speak to these problems—Manetho's text is still invaluable. In the face of all these indices of Manetho's authority, how can Apion—with his glosses of Homer and paradoxographic stories about Egypt—really be emic and auto-ethnographic? Apion is no Manetho.

These comparisons unnecessarily undermine Apion's claims to an authentic Egyptian identity. They suggest that there was a narrow window for *Aegyptiaca*,

63. Even though it is overly schematic in its treatment of politics and religion, Huss (1994, 123–29 for Manetho) presents valuable evidence for the relationship between the Ptolemies and Egyptian priests.

64. Dillery (2015, 301–47), and Moyer (2011, 84–141).

65. The "king's novel" is a specific subgenre of royal *res gestae* outlined by Loprieno (1996, 281–82 for problems of definition) and typologized by Hofmann (2004).

66. For an Egyptological reconstruction of Manetho's core political history, see Redford (1986, 231–332).

the title for Manetho's work and an umbrella term for texts written about Egypt by Egyptians but presented to Greeks and Romans.⁶⁷ To most, *Aegyptiaca* begins and ends with Manetho. It turns into a brief, early-Ptolemaic efflorescence. Apion does not enter into the conversation. That is why the comparison does so much damage. It delimits the space in which *Aegyptiaca* is allowed to operate. It implies that only Egyptians with an ill-defined ethnic and cultural purity should be of interest for the way that they represent Egypt and claim an intellectual authority over it. It separates *Aegyptiaca* and Alexandrian intellectual culture into alternately Egyptian and Greek traditions. Most importantly, it ignores the ways in which cultural contact between the constituent Greek and Egyptian parts of Ptolemaic Egypt produced a new face of Egyptian intellectual authority with which Rome came into contact.⁶⁸

Even Manetho himself, at first blush the representative of *Aegyptiaca* in its strict guise of emic annalistic history, wrote broadly and synthetically. The canonized Egyptological Manetho I just outlined misses much of his intellectual activity. Besides his king list, Manetho is credited with a text called *On the Preparation of Kyphi*, a medical-cum-religious incense (Egyptian *k³p.t*) used in temples and for fumigation. Plutarch repeats a recipe for *kyphi* in *On Isis and Osiris*, a Platonic interpretation of the Osiris myth that drew heavily on Manetho for reliable information on Egyptian religion.⁶⁹ Manetho's interest in a religio-magical incense inaugurates a mixed religious and technical presentation of Egypt that Apion's *osiritis* continues. A combination of Greek and Egyptian traditions is inbuilt into *Aegyptiaca* from its foundation.

Recentring Cultural Mixedness

Comparisons between Manetho, the first identifiable practitioner of *Aegyptiaca*, and latter-day practitioners of this genre like Apion need not inevitably conclude that Manetho's Egypt is the only one worthy of the name. A comparison of Manetho and Apion can help carve out a new space in which the new intellectual culture practiced by fluid and difficult-to-pin-down figures like Apion can be appreciated on its own terms. Apion's interest in both things Greek like Homer and things Egyptian like scarab beetles does not make him less Egyptian than Manetho. It does make clear that the meaning of "Egyptian" has changed from Manetho to Apion. What has been a specific issue of what to call Apion balloons out into a

67. The term *Aegyptiaca* has been used by scholars as a generic label, as is clear in Burstein (1996, 598–604) and Dillery (2003, 383).

68. This cultural contact has been increasingly well-discussed by historians of Ptolemaic Egypt, with volumes like Rutherford (2016) and Papaconstantinou (2010) (multilingualism specifically) devoted to the subject.

69. Manetho is cited for his "On Preparation of Kyphi" in Suda μ 142, s.v. Μάνεθως = *BNJ* 609 T 1 (cf. F 16a). Plutarch, implicitly (per Jacoby) but not explicitly citing Manetho, repeats the recipe in *DIO* 52, 372c and 80, 383e–384b.

much larger question about how one can discuss Egyptian culture in a world characterized on the one hand by an increasingly blurry Greek–Egyptian cultural milieu and on the other by the rise to preeminence of Roman hegemony in the Eastern Mediterranean. Apion opens a vantage onto something new: a culture born of contact between Egyptians and Greeks but that is neither Egyptian nor Greek in the way that those two cultures have normally been understood.⁷⁰ It is this literary tradition, and these Egyptians, that this book will recuperate.

Postcolonial scholarship has long focused on cultures changed by imperial occupation. To discuss Apion and Roman Egypt more broadly, one must navigate through two opposite dangers. On the one hand, one cannot simply conclude that colonization effects the “death” of an indigenous culture.⁷¹ This kind of thinking has been implicit in work on Roman Egypt, where Persian, Greek, and then Roman occupations contributed to the supposed death of Egyptian culture. Work on Roman–Egyptian culture often trades in rhetorics of decline, whether in the “stagnation” of temple architecture or in the “long-drawn-out senescence” of scribal and religious learning.⁷² In this decline model, Apion and others like him are fallen characters irreparably separated from an original, better Egyptian culture.

But on the other hand, one cannot pretend that colonization can be ignored. In the practice of anthropology in the nineteenth century, this led to a dogged quest to root out the “pure” parts of colonized cultures and ignore the places and people that were no longer unimpeachable examples of timeless indigeneity. This too occurs in Egypt, amid claims that in the hinterland Egyptian culture continued unchanged by Ptolemaic and Roman occupations. Too often, inscriptions in Ptolemaic- and Roman-Egyptian temples are presented as tidy evidence of much earlier pharaonic religion.⁷³

To properly see Apion and his texts, one needs to look both to the endurance of Egyptian traditions and to the changes that Ptolemaic and Roman occupations

70. To paraphrase the “third space” of Bhabha (1990).

71. Bagnall (1997) is loath to discuss the Ptolemaic occupation of Egypt in the language of colonization. More recently, Moyer (2022, 173–74) cautions against an uncritical application of modern decolonization struggles to the ancient world; as he notes, this theoretical retrojection risks masking the moral frameworks that animated Egyptian resistance to Ptolemaic rule.

72. Arnold (1999, 228) for the “stagnation” of Roman-Egyptian temple architecture, Fowden (1986, 65) for the “long-drawn-out senescence” of scribal and religious traditions. See also the language of “neglect, decline, and abandonment” in Bagnall (1993, 322), forcefully rebutted by Frankfurter (1998, 12–13, 28–30), who emphasizes instead the resilience of local Egyptian religion. In the case of Hermeticism, Bull (2018, 370, 465) deftly rebuts an overuse of “decline” when confronting the changes in Roman-Egyptian temple and cult practice.

73. Much of our knowledge of key mythic cycles derives from temples of the Roman and Ptolemaic periods. Restricting oneself to Edfu, this reconstructive impulse is laced throughout Chassinat (1931) and Blackman and Fairman (1942, 1946). In this regard, the critique offered by Finnstad (1985, 5–6), to situate the temple in its Ptolemaic moment, is salutary. For Philae, see also Dijkstra (2008, 15–18), which despite its title (“the end of Egyptian religion”) emphasizes transformation over decline.

made to life in Egypt. A theoretical framework built on cultural mixture can best capture this dual vision. As I have been suggesting, it is unproductive to force Apion into Greek or Egyptian frames and bemoan the Egyptian culture of which he is emblematic. His own embodiment of a mix of cultural forms and traditions offers a middle way that captures the processes of contact and creative connection characteristic of Roman Egypt.

This reevaluation of mixedness has been an important development within modern communities reflecting on colonially mediated cultural contact. So, for example, the *creolité* movement of the French Caribbean has been animated by a desire to acknowledge and celebrate, rather than ignore or bemoan, the mixed cultures produced by colonialism—even as such movements emphasize that this mixture was the product of colonizers’ systematic violence. A label that creates space for mixedness is the only real answer to my opening, tendentious question about Apion’s identity. Apion’s Egyptianized Homer (or Homeric Egypt) is untidy. Discussions of Apion should not trade in disjunctive either/ors. Apion’s authority as auto-ethnographer is derived from, and not in spite of, the blending of Greek and Egyptian in his testimonia and fragments. To call Apion an Alexandrian is not to deny that he is an Egyptian.

Terms like creolization, hybridization, and the various cognates of “mixedness” (*métissage*, *mestizaje*) have been differently applied and arise from different contexts, but they all, at their heart, try to recuperate designations of mixed people. The early history of labels such as creole, métis, or mestizo points to an attempt to individuate a person of mixed-race background. That this mixture is embodied is critical to the semantics of these terms, even after they widened into broader theoretical frames for mixed cultures. In other words, a diversity that consists of distinct cultural entities that reside alongside each other is not really diverse. Whether via hybridization or creolization, there has been a sustained interest in combating this juxtaposed diversity and the maintenance of cultural purity which it enables.⁷⁴ Turning from modernity to antiquity, the processes of cultural exchange and contact that took hold in Ptolemaic Egypt have been an object of focus for many who have underlined this very point.⁷⁵

Despite these recent efforts, many discussions of Egypt in the Roman world still trade in this view of juxtaposed, but otherwise pure, Greek and Egyptian cultural domains. In this rubric, the Greek and Egyptian components of Egypt are

74. Among these different terms, I will use creolization and its application by Glissant. But this is not to deny the value of other theorizations, like the defense of hybridity offered by Bhabha (1994, 25 for political hybridity and 57–60 for linguistic hybridity), which also seeks to combat false narratives of purity. This differs from the narrower, teleological definition of hybridization critiqued by Glissant (1996, 18–21, and 2009, 64).

75. This has become a dominant theme in work on Ptolemaic Egypt, with too long a bibliography to list here. Of particular importance is Thompson (1988), Stephens (2003), Dieleman (2005), Jasnow and Zauzich (2005), Clarysse and Thompson (2006), Moyer (2011), Ryholt (2012), Quack (2021).

co-existing solitudes that exist alongside, but across a chasm from, each other. The traditional view of Alexandria as next to, but not within, Egypt has engraved this isolated purity. Apion's representation of Alexandria troubles this image of a sealed-off Greek city. The spaces that Apion traverses are brought into connection and collectively constitute an inherently diverse Egypt. This inextricable interconnection of Alexandria and the rest of Egypt sets the stage for Apion's intellectual production. Apion mixed together a spectrum of intellectual traditions that cannot be completely separated into Greek and Egyptian component parts.

Apion benefits from, and is himself a benefit to, these broader theoretical discussions of cultural mixedness under systems of imperial power. Apion can enrich modern discussions of cultural mixture just as much as he is enriched by them. This starts with his unapologetic opportunism.⁷⁶ Apion was a loud promoter of his own expertise; in a very material way, Apion's ability to promote different identities opened doors that brought him fame and repute. The socioeconomic realities that shaped Apion's own culturally plural intellectual authority are important context. Apion's shameless opportunism points up a social cachet gained from cultural mixture that can add nuance and social context to wider discussions of creolized intellectual traditions.

Creolization is just one thread in this broad "mixedness" movement, but it can help recenter Apion and the tradition of *Aegyptiaca*.⁷⁷ Like many previously pejorative terms for mixture, the term creole has a long history. It has bounced from a historical designation to individuate those born in the New World vs. the Old, to the plank of elite "creole nationalists" during the decolonizations of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to a linguistic term for language contact, into a broader postcolonial term to celebrate the mixed.⁷⁸ Amid this swirl of interconnected usage, the Martinican novelist, poet, and philosopher Édouard Glissant offers a defense of creolization that reveals how discussions of Apion have gone awry.⁷⁹

The argument that I will put before you is that the world is creolizing: that is, the world's cultures today, brought into contact with each other at lightning speed, in an absolutely conscious manner, change through exchange with each other, by

76. As I discuss in the Introduction, this mirroring of ancient and modern holds particularly true for the exclusivity inbuilt in elites' arrogation of a mixed identity, both by authors of *Aegyptiaca* like Apion and Chaeremon and by early-modern creoles.

77. Hannerz (1987) reintroduced creolization into cultural anthropology, taking it as a linguistic term. This fails to see creole's earlier usage, as a way of individuating Europeans born in the colonies from those born in Europe.

78. Baker and Mühlhäusler (2007) offer an overview of the term's movement into linguistics. Anderson (1991) developed the label "creole nationalists"; his broad application of "creole" is critiqued by Palmié (2007, 69).

79. Glissant's work belies any simple description, but Britton (1999) remains the best synopsis of his intellectual trajectory.

way of inexorable clashes, pitiless wars, but also of advances in consciousness and hope, which enable us to claim—without being utopian, or rather, by embracing utopianism—that today’s human communities are engaging in the difficult process of giving up something to which they have obstinately clung for a long time: *that is, the conviction that the identity of a being is valid and recognizable only if it excludes the identity of all other possible beings.*⁸⁰

Glissant singles out this last change of perspective—moving from a narrow to a capacious and plural identity formation—as creolization’s goal. Only with this kind of identity can one push past Josephus’s zero-sum critique of Apion’s Greekness to a fuller appreciation of Apion’s many identities. Josephus argued that Apion’s Egyptian identity, itself inalienable and unalterable, necessarily excludes and delegitimizes Apion’s Alexandrianism and Greekness. I would argue that one does not need to accept the presentism highlighted by Glissant to appreciate the correction he is offering to zero-sum identity formation.⁸¹ Apion reveals that this plural and non-exclusive sense of self has always been there, even as some claim it is the preserve of contemporary globalization.

The shift from creole to creolization highlights that cultural mixture is a process rather than an achieved state. It is constantly ongoing and does not reach a fixed or predetermined end. This is why Glissant stresses the “chaos-world” and its constant, unpredictable, and non-teleological contact.⁸² Glissant’s chaotic and unending view of cultural contact was heavily influenced by rhizomatic philosophy.⁸³ Rhizomes underline decentered, unending, “chaotic” collaborative processes that stand in contrast to a center-expansion, individualist model entailed by tree-based imagery. Glissant latches onto this idea to emphasize that a proper vision of cultural mixture is decentered and ongoing. In other words, Apion is not the end result of a fixed combination of Greek and Egyptian inputs that started under Ptolemy Soter. Apion’s Aegyptiaca is not a predictable, set outcome when pure “Greek” and “Egyptian” cultures are mixed together. A “chaotic” vision of creolization is designed to oppose this static and fixed view of cultural connection.

Put simply, no matter when one looks in the ancient Mediterranean, mixing is already underway.⁸⁴ The pharaonic-Egyptian and classical-Greek cultures that

80. Glissant (2020, 6), translated from Glissant (1996, 15). Emphasis my own.

81. Apion’s transit around the Mediterranean and diversity of expertise also help to rebut the different “speeds” of ancient and modern creolization proposed by Glissant (1996, 27–28).

82. As Glissant grew older, he increasingly underlined a processual and ongoing theorization of “relation.” His “chaos world” borrows from scientific chaos theory to emphasize the random, ongoing quality of creolization (on which see Glissant 1996, 81–107).

83. Promoted in Deleuze and Guattari (1980, 9–37) and discussed by Glissant (1997, 195–96) and Britton (1999, 17–18).

84. In this respect, creolization’s insistence on the processual and the ongoing borders on the “always-already given” formulation of Althusser (2001, 119), who stresses how we are, from our birth, already subjects in ideological systems.

overshadow Apion's novel combination of Greek and Egyptian traditions were not themselves pure or born in isolation. An appreciation of the ongoing process of exchange provides welcome caution in two directions. It helps mitigate the sense that Alexander the Great's conquests were a "big-bang" moment that inaugurated cultural exchange between Greeks and Egyptians. The histories of material and intellectual exchange between Egypt and Greece extend thousands of years before Alexander.⁸⁵ The unendingness of cultural mixture also obviates the language of death and decay that haunts work on the intellectual culture of Roman Egypt. Despite its remarkable conservatism, Egyptian culture was always changing. Egypt's combination of an elasticity that admits cultural exchange and a deep cultural conservatism is what makes the later periods of Egyptian history so remarkable.

Even when cultural exchange is a process without beginning or end, the pace at which exchange takes place can accelerate. Cultures were put into contact because of the political and demographic changes of the Hellenistic and early-imperial world distinctly from, and to a greater degree than, the periods which immediately preceded them. Even though cultural exchange and mixture is a permanent fixture of the ancient Mediterranean, one can still justifiably note the new set of legal and socioeconomic frames for that mixture. A combination of Greek and Egyptian traditions is not new.⁸⁶ That said, the extent of that mixture in Apion's work and its orientation toward Rome *are* new. The introduction of Rome as a third node adds a critical ingredient that makes Apion's specific embodiment of cultural exchange, mixture, and movement even more deserving of a theoretical point of view that can accommodate it.

Movement is the operative word. Apion moved from the Oasis, through Alexandria, to Rome. In doing so, he followed a path carved by the dictates of an imperial apparatus predicated on the exchange of goods. Alexandria was the intermediary for the movement both of people and of stuff—one could only become a Roman after he or she became an Alexandrian. The geographer Strabo's opening salvo on Alexandria claims: "It is the greatest emporium in the inhabited world."⁸⁷ Keeping an eye on the imperial apparatus that facilitated movement brings together two different Aegyptiacas, the one a culturally mixed literary tradition and the other the broad label for material culture exported from Egypt to Rome. They were complementary exports. People, ideas, cults, cereals, and stones moved from Egypt to Rome through Alexandria.⁸⁸ Like Apion's auto-ethnography and the mixture of

85. See, for instance, the lengthy bibliography provided by Pfeiffer (2013).

86. Work on the early-Ptolemaic world makes clear that this creative combination of cultural forms has a long life. See, e.g., Stephens (2003) for Alexandrian literature, and the Greek and Demotic variants of both Greek and Egyptian literature (e.g., the Dream of Nectanebo and the Alexander Romance) discussed by Ryholt (2012).

87. Strabo 17.1.13: μέγιστον ἐμπόριον τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐστί.

88. While he focuses on the high empire, Haas (2007, 41–44) notes the economic importance of Alexandria. For a broader perspective on Rome's international trade and Egypt's importance thereto, see Tomber (2012).

Greek and Egyptian traditions it promoted, the objects that moved from Egypt to Rome were invested with a swirl of different cultural significations that is poorly served by a disjunctive and sequential (first Egyptian, then Greek, then Roman) approach to meaning and identity.⁸⁹

Both of these Aegyptiacas must be viewed from two competing perspectives. The hybrid and dynamic identities of both author and object are best framed through creolization and its rhizomatic imagery.⁹⁰ This helps undermine the prioritization of birth used by Josephus to discredit Apion. To Josephus, movement becomes cultural erasure—Apion attempts to abandon an Egyptian identity when he moves to Alexandria. The same zero-sum game of value extends to Egypt’s material culture. Obelisks become purely a sign of imperialism and exoticism as soon as they leave Egypt. In response, it is worth appreciating these objects’ polyvalency and combating essentialist views of identity. But still, one must appreciate that the paths that Apion and obelisks took to Rome were well-worn. Networks of exchange are both facilitated and circumscribed by processes of imperial occupation. Roman control of Egypt is no different.

In her 2005 book, the anthropologist Anna Tsing developed the term “friction” to capture this interplay of facilitation and circumscription of exchange. She uses the metaphor of the “road” to highlight this tension: “Roads are a good image for conceptualizing how friction works: Roads create pathways that make motion easier and more efficient, but in doing so they limit where we go. The ease of travel they facilitate is also a structure of confinement. Friction inflects historical trajectories, enabling, excluding, and particularizing.”⁹¹ Both types of Aegyptiaca, the set of objects exported from Egypt and the literary genre inaugurated by Manetho, traveled to Rome on precisely this kind of road.

Since Droysen coined the term “Hellenism,” there has been a belief that Hellenism could change other cultures without itself being changed.⁹² With Alexander’s conquest, Greek culture expanded into newly emptied spaces, and the resulting process ran only in one direction. Friction offers a welcome corrective, one that shifts away from a unidirectional and one-sided view of cultural contact. Per Tsing, “cultures are continually co-produced in the interactions I call ‘friction:’ the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference.” In an interconnected world, cultures are co-produced. In other words, Greek culture is implicated into this image of exchange. Cultural mixture goes in both directions, if not equally.

89. Discussing material culture, Barrett (2019, 34–35) cautions against “dismissing Egyptian meanings, uses, and values as a priori irrelevant to Roman Aegyptiaca.”

90. I use the term “identity of objects” intentionally, to put their own status on an equal level with authors of Aegyptiaca. This reevaluation of nonhuman objects (so-called object-oriented ontology) is developed by Harman (2018).

91. Tsing (2005, with the two quotes at 4 and 6 respectively).

92. Droysen (1836–43). For review and analysis of its impact, see Momigliano (1994, 147–61). Chrubasik and King (2017) (particularly King 2017 and Paganini 2017) reevaluate Hellenism in the context of Ptolemaic Egypt.

Centering the cultural mixedness of the Hellenistic and imperial periods does not just help validate Apion's Egyptian identity, which is enriched, rather than problematized, by his interest in Greek intellectual culture. It also makes clear that canons of Greek literature were not shielded from the cultural contact that is a defining feature of the Eastern Mediterranean world. To Romans, Apion became an authority over intellectual traditions that are reliably Greek. For Pliny the Elder, he was the one who discussed Homer and Pythagoras. To reach further afield, Apuleius was a North-African who was one of *the* authorities over Middle Platonism.⁹³ Apion thus shines as bright a light on imperial Greek culture as he does on imperial Egyptian culture. His own biography particularizes a general anxiety of certain Greeks of the imperial period, that Greek culture was no longer tethered to the traditional places where it had been practiced.⁹⁴ Ethnic Egyptians could legitimately claim Greek traditions as their own. It is only amid this broad, inexorable, and constantly evolving relocation of Greek culture that the fence-building, gate-keeping, and general cultural conservatism of authors like Plutarch, Athenaeus, and Philostratus gain coherence.

Tsing and Glissant use different metaphors—road and root—to imagine the ties that connect across difference. Glissant's "roots" prioritize decentralization to promote a fundamentally "relational" and nonhierarchical creation of meaning.⁹⁵ Tsing uses the road to grapple with an interconnection that is both enabled and delimited by colonial and neocolonial systems of exchange. Apion contributes to both perspectives on cultural production under systems of power. Especially when framed against Glissant's theory of creolization, Apion is a Greek/Egyptian/Alexandrian who reconfigures and, ultimately, broadens culturally plural intellectual authority. Once we leave behind a litmus of purity and primordial authenticity, emic presentations of Egypt born under creolization emerge from Manetho's considerable shadow. Manetho's stature has kept hidden the long history of Egyptians articulating Egyptian culture in a mixed cultural vocabulary. In the chapters that follow, I will reemphasize that Aegyptiaca was not a static blip located in the early Ptolemaic period; it was instead a dynamic, "chaotic" process in dialogue with the social and economic exigencies that dictated its production. This development

93. So, for example, he wrote a handbook titled the *De Platone*. For Apuleius as Middle Platonist, see Dillon (1997, 306–38).

94. Or, to use terminology developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1980, 16–19), there is a process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, where Greek cultural systems are dislocated from their original localities in mainland Greece and introduced to Egypt, where they are then incorporated into Egyptian systems of thought.

95. Glissant (2009) emphasizes the ethical value of "relation." It is worth noting that, like Tsing, Glissant is also keenly aware of the systems of control that shape creolization—his constant interest in the Middle Passage (discussed in Drabinski 2019) is the most obvious example of this kind of colonially controlled movement.

of *Aegyptiaca* is decidedly not the story of declining authority, of the death of true Egyptianness.

But even among this ongoing intellectual creativity, Apion followed a road to Alexandria and Rome that was created by systems of power and control. One can only arrive at an honest image of Apion's cultural production by seeing the unequal systems of control that put Egyptian, Greek, and Roman traditions on different footings. Whether Manetho or Apion, authors of *Aegyptiaca* were forced to navigate an imperial apparatus. Apion helps advance that conversation into the Roman period. Discussions of Apion's co-production of Greek and Egyptian cultures must not only account for Ptolemaic systems of inequality within Egypt, but must also keep an eye on a wider background of Roman imperial control of the Eastern Mediterranean that created new "roads" on which Apion traveled.

Apion and the other practitioners of *Aegyptiaca* I will go on to describe forged a new identity to best articulate Egyptian culture in (unequal) dialogue with Orientalizing Roman projections of Egypt and Egyptians. The role that such authors of *Aegyptiaca* had in presenting Egyptian culture to a Roman audience only emerges in a theoretical framework that gives space to their own agency. In this regard, I am deliberately leaving aside Orientalism as a theoretical strategy.⁹⁶ This is not to dispute its utility for Greek or Roman projections of an Egyptian other. It is merely to point out that Orientalism, by definition, cannot discuss people like Apion and the way they move between Orient and Occident.⁹⁷ Said ably proves that his subjects do not listen to, or have any meaningful awareness of, emic articulations of the spaces onto which the West projects Orientalizing fantasies. The same lack of awareness has been implicitly brought along with Orientalism into the ancient world. But this assumption speaks more to modern disciplinary codification—Apion resides in between Classics and Egyptology—than to the reality of the ancient world.

Mapping Aegyptiaca

Apion and others who arrogated a new, mixed Egyptian identity reveal the importance of changing *Aegyptiaca* from a single designation for Manetho's work to a broader, ongoing literary discourse. This wider *Aegyptiaca* was practiced by a range of Egyptians deploying a range of different intellectual authorities for social advancement among Ptolemaic and then Roman dynasts. Apion's specific synthesis of Homer and Egyptian paradoxography was one of many different ways that

96. Said (1978).

97. Parker (2011, 6–7) notes the incommensurability between actual movement of Egyptians to Rome and the quite different mechanics of Orientalism, which do not incorporate this type of human interaction.

authors of *Aegyptiaca* carved out authority for themselves through a mixture of Greek and Egyptian intellectual traditions. What does the terrain encompassed by *Aegyptiaca* look like? Who practiced it, and what did they talk about? Under what emperors? How did they represent Egypt?

The slipperiness of Apion's identity applies more broadly to the full spectrum of authors writing on Egypt. Creolization and Glissant's "root" metaphor of ongoing intercultural contact warn that policing boundaries between Greek, outsider representations of Egypt and authoritative, Egyptian auto-ethnography is untenable. There is no one set template of mixture for Greek and Egyptian contact. This spectrum of Greco-Egyptian authorial identity must also account for time. Creolization as an unbounded process helps chart a path from the early Ptolemaic period, when exogenous Greeks followed socioeconomic opportunity and migrated to the court of the Ptolemies, down into the early-imperial period and Apion.

Different authors, then, offer different definitions of what an Egyptian might be. Some of these definitions might be too loose. Hecataeus of Abdera, an exogenous ethnic Greek who moved to Alexandria and wrote a history of Egypt copied by Diodorus, is not Egyptian in the same way—or even to the same extent—as an indigenous Egyptian like Manetho.⁹⁸ The substance of their texts bear this out: Hecataeus hews more closely to Herodotean storytelling, and Manetho to Egyptian annalistic history. But that said, both authors lived in Egypt; they both blended Egyptian and Greek elements in their texts; they both wrote about Egyptian history and had reliable access to Egyptian temple archives. A comparison of Hecataeus and Manetho provokes contradictory and equally important responses: drawing firm lines around and thus making meaningful the category "Egyptian;" and appreciating Glissant's creolization, which proves that such boundary-policing is treacherous.

But no matter how you slice it, *Aegyptiaca* is still a substantial literary tradition: Ptolemy of Mendes, Charon of Naucratis, Lyceas of Naucratis, Asclepiades of Mendes, Chaeremon, Hermaeus, Lysimachus, Thrasyllus of Mendes, Pancrates, Seleucus of Alexandria, and Amometus all wrote on and resided in Egypt between Ptolemy Soter and Hadrian.⁹⁹ These places of origin, largely restricted to locations in the Delta, speak to the ambiguous ways in which locales in Egypt are tethered to specific identities.¹⁰⁰ As in Apion's Alexandrianism, the wider tradition of *Aegyptiaca* will reemphasize that "Greek" cities like Naucratis in fact represent a productive mixture of Greek and Egyptian culture. They are decidedly not bulwarks of unmixed and unchanging Hellenism. As a crude mechanism, such lists of now-fragmentary authors can reveal a background of cultural mixture

98. For Hecataeus's fragments, Lang (2012). For Diodorus's use of Hecataeus, Murray (1970) (*pace* Muntz 2008).

99. These are the toponyms assigned to these authors by Jacoby.

100. I note the tension between the fluidity of cultural mixedness and the rigidity of citizenship statuses in Roman Egypt in the Introduction.

that contextualizes a blinkered definition of Greek cultural purity endorsed by Athenaeus and other mainstays of imperial Hellenism.¹⁰¹

APION BETWEEN ROOT AND ROAD

Apion is an Egyptian who is both Egyptian and Greek. That messiness is what makes him such a productive introduction to a discourse on Egypt called *Aegyptiaca*. Through Apion, one can push *Aegyptiaca* beyond and outside the confines of Manetho. It is a tradition in part defined, rather than undercut, by its authors' propensity to participate in Alexandrian intellectual culture—in Apion's case Homeric textual criticism. These authors' dual role, both in imperial Greek intellectual history and in the presentation of Egyptian traditions, is an asset of, and not a flaw in, the definition of *Aegyptiaca* I will flesh out in the next chapter.

The path that Apion took to Alexandria and then Rome points in two directions simultaneously. Like grain, stone, and other material culture that were exported from Egypt, Apion followed a road to Rome that had been charted by processes of imperial occupation. Tsing's imagery of the road and of friction begin to show how the cultural co-constitution of traditions one sees in Apion's work is simultaneously enabled and circumscribed by imperial systems of control. But at the same time, Glissant's discussion of creolization challenges what has been a Venn diagram-like approach to cultural mixture in Roman Egypt. There remains an insistent belief that Greece and Egypt are circles with a delimited area of intersection. Apion's cross-cultural, synthetic work redraws that conceptual map.¹⁰² It instead points to a new domain of Greco-Egyptian culture that created a new range of intellectual authorities. The literary tradition of *Aegyptiaca* was characterized by a cultural "web," in which disparate traditions were connected to each other in a constantly evolving network of exchange, contact, and mixture. This dual vision—imperial circumscription and creative, non-hierarchical cultural entanglement—is a defining feature of *Aegyptiaca*, which I am arguing is an identifiable literary tradition situated at the intersection of these two competing frames.

Apion's embassy on behalf of Alexandrians brought him face-to-face with the emperor Caligula. Josephus's critiques of Apion yoked together his intellectual output—particularly his views on the Exodus—and his social trajectory to Rome via Alexandria. Rome and its self-positioning against the preexisting *polis* system thus inflected the practice of *Aegyptiaca*. This extends well beyond Apion. All the authors of *Aegyptiaca* I will discuss in the following chapters also had a direct relationship with the Roman emperor, whether Caligula, Nero, Domitian, or Hadrian. This relationship between emperor and author structured Greeks' and

101. Thompson (2003) emphasizes the value that Athenaeus places on the Hellenism of Egypt's Greek *poles*.

102. Glissant (2009, 64–66) critiques "hybridization" for precisely this reason.

Romans' interpretations of the texts that these authors wrote. The reverse is also true. Thus, not only was the tradition of Aegyptiaca shaped by Roman systems of power; Aegyptiaca itself helped shape those systems of power in the first place. This reciprocal interconnection of Greco-Egyptian intellectual culture and Roman justifications of imperial power is a central component of Aegyptiaca and Alexandrianism, to which I turn in the next chapter.