

Aegyptiaca

Triangulating a Coherently Incoherent Genre

Through Apion, I have introduced the Egyptian discourse on Egypt called Aegyptiaca and suggested that it was an identifiable tradition extending beyond its first practitioner Manetho. Apion opened the door onto a broad auto-ethnographic genre—Egyptians writing in Greek about Egyptian culture for a non-Egyptian audience—whose vibrancy and importance extended into the imperial period. As a tradition that combined various genres, Aegyptiaca is difficult to pin down. The flexibility and cultural mixture that characterize Apion and his work were constitutive features of Aegyptiaca and its authors.

Apion's own brand of literary expertise thus gives way to Aegyptiaca's much wider terrain. In the interconnected web of creolizing intellectual traditions through which I am defining Aegyptiaca, different authors occupied different coordinates. Chaeremon, the Balbillus family, and Pancrates—the subjects of this chapter—brought together a different mix of Egyptian and Greek genres in different ways. The literary heterogeneity exemplified by these authors' works, and fundamental to Aegyptiaca, has been poorly served both by the boundary-setting around "historian" in Jacoby's *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* and by the very literal separation of these authors into multiple versions of themselves along the fault lines that separate their Greek and Egyptian intellectual activity.¹

Two competing themes arise when Aegyptiaca is viewed synoptically, rather than through individual exemplars like Manetho or Apion. On the one hand, there

1. Of the authors discussed in this chapter, Chaeremon (618), Thrasylus (622), and Pancrates (625) receive entries in *FGrH* (and its update *BNJ*), and Tiberius Claudius Balbillus and Julia Balbilla do not. Thrasylus's astrological fragments are excluded from his entry in *FGrH*, as are the Pancrates discussed in Lucian and the magical papyri. The different Balbilluses identified in the *PIR* (discussed below) are the clearest example of this separation.

was no one set template to write *Aegyptiaca*. There is more to *Aegyptiaca* than Apion's Egyptianized Homer, or Manetho's annalistic history, or even the entire succession of Egyptian authors contained in Jacoby. *Aegyptiaca* brought several different Egyptian knowledge traditions together: Egyptian religion, presented in both natural-philosophical and mythological terms; Alexandrian intellectual culture, of which Apion, Chaeremon, and other authors of *Aegyptiaca* were mainstays in the imperial period; Egyptian history, variously investigated through pharaonic annalistic genres, paradoxography, epic poetry, and religious history; and technical genres like astronomy, pharmacology, and mathematics, which were born of the cultural mixture of Egypt's Hellenistic period. Grammatically and substantively, *Aegyptiaca* is plural.

But on the other hand, there is some coherence here. All of the Egyptians discussed in this chapter shared a direct—if sometimes transitory—connection with the Roman emperor. *Aegyptiaca* as a mixed literary tradition became symptomatic of the processes of social change that Egyptians capitalized on for advancement, but traditionalist Romans frequently bemoaned. Biographical trajectories that brought these authors to positions of bureaucratic prominence and to the emperor's inner circle adumbrate the way that their texts were viewed. These authors strategically presented Egyptian culture—its astrological knowledge, its priestly learning, its history of kingship—in a way that served the purposes of Rome's emperors, who increasingly relied on Egypt for ideological justification of sole rule. In this respect, the Hellenistic backdrop of *Aegyptiaca* prefigures imperial-era authors. Manetho navigated how best to tell Egypt's story to a new Ptolemaic regime keen to take advantage of Egyptian forms of imperial self-expression. This same dynamic continues in the work of Chaeremon, the Balbilli, and Pancrates, all of whom presented their own texts under the same set of motivations. The tension between these two facets of *Aegyptiaca*—its wide-ranging subject matter and the consistency of its authors' biographies—is the “coherent incoherence” I discuss in this chapter.

CHAEREMON THE EGYPTIAN PHILOSOPHER

The questions of identity that Apion posed continue as one moves on to other authors of *Aegyptiaca*. Chaeremon, the tutor of Nero, Stoic philosopher, and Egyptian sacred scribe, benefits from the same indeterminacy of identity.² Just like Apion, one can ask whether he should be called a Greek or Egyptian or Alexandrian, because like Apion different scholars have variously applied these labels to him. Jonathan Tracy calls Chaeremon an ethnic Greek, Elena Manolaraki calls him

2. To paraphrase the list of Chaeremon's identifiers offered by Moyer (2011, 242n136). Chaeremon is frequently cited, but rarely discussed. For the most recent scholarship on Chaeremon, see van der Horst (1982, 1984), Barzanò (1985), Frede (1989), and Rodríguez (2007).

Egyptian, and both identify him as an Alexandrian.³ This ambiguity lays bare, once again, the difficulty of hierarchizing the different elements—citizenship, language, place of birth, education—that constitute identity labels like Greek, Alexandrian, and Egyptian. Chaeremon’s slippage across different cultural domains extends to the texts that he wrote, which have a threefold interest in Greek, Egyptian, and blended Greco-Egyptian knowledge traditions. Chaeremon is most frequently cited for his *Hieroglyphica*, an explanation of the hieroglyphic script that highlights the philosophical and cosmological concepts built into hieroglyphic signs. Such a text would certainly have been popular for a Roman audience, given the ubiquity of hieroglyphic-inscribed Egyptian and Egyptianizing objects across Italy.⁴

But in addition to claiming Egyptian authority via the *Hieroglyphica*, Chaeremon also wrote about Greek language and literature. His treatise on Greek expletive conjunctions (think “certainly” or “indeed”) does not sound like the most scintillating text.⁵ But like Apion’s textual criticism, it rubber-stamped Chaeremon’s position of authority as a grammarian in the Alexandrian mold. The Suda, a Byzantine encyclopedia, is admittedly not the most reliable source, but it still claims that Chaeremon ran the Alexandrian libraries, embassies, rescripts, and letters.⁶ While the historical accuracy of this claim is debatable, the assignment of so many core Alexandrian responsibilities proves that Chaeremon successfully cemented an association with Alexandrian administration and intellectual culture that stood the test of time.

There is more promising evidence for Chaeremon’s Alexandrian connections. He appears in one of the best documentary sources for Rome’s relationship with imperial Alexandria. The papyrus in question (P. Lond. 1912) contains the emperor Claudius’s letter to the Alexandrians, written in 41 CE. In it, he responds to a series

3. Tracy (2014, 260), where he specifies that Chaeremon is an ethnic Greek based on his name. Elsewhere (9, 43, 174) he opts for “Alexandrian polymath.” Manolaraki (2013, 107) calls Chaeremon “Egyptian” (ditto Moyer 2011, 242n136; cf. the “Memphite” of Frankfurter 1998, 225), though Manolaraki later (108) fleshes that out with the label “Alexandrian Stoic philosopher.”

4. I discuss Chaeremon’s explanation of hieroglyphic in detail in chapter 5. Swetnam-Burland (2015, 41–53) analyzes hieroglyphic inscriptions created *de novo* in Italy and calls attention to the Egyptians in Italy—Chaeremon included—who facilitated their creation.

5. Per *BNJ* 618 F 9. Chaeremon’s work on conjunctions is mentioned by the famous Alexandrian grammarian Apollonius Dyscolus in his definitive work *On Syntax* (p. 515 in the Bekker numeration derived from the *Anecdota Graeca* v. 2, though better consulted through the standard edition, Schneider 1878, 248).

6. Per Suda δ 1173, s.v. Διονύσιος Ἀλεξανδρεὺς = T 4, which claims that Dionysius succeeded Chaeremon as head of libraries, department of letters, embassies, and rescripts. For the Suda as source for testimonia and fragments, see Vanotti (2010), and particularly the discussion of Jacoby’s use of the Suda in Schepens (2010, 9–11). Unless otherwise noted, I use van der Horst (1984) for text and numeration of Chaeremon’s testimonia and fragments, and translations are my own. Where important, I will compare the numeration of Keyser (2014) (*BNJ* 618).

of requests made by Alexandrian ambassadors.⁷ After solicitously offering golden statues, a holiday, and a temple to honor Claudius's ascension to power, the Alexandrian petitioners had tried to pin all responsibility for the ongoing Alexandrian riots on Jews, rather than themselves. In the bulk of the letter, Claudius thanks the Alexandrians for the honors, but denies their request for a *boulê* and refuses to clear them of all blame in causing the riots. Claudius's diplomatic response includes Chaeremon's name among the list of Alexandrian ambassadors who authored the original petition.⁸

Here again, Chaeremon checks the same box as Apion, who had also represented Alexandrians to Claudius's predecessor Caligula during the riots of 38 CE. As in that case, Chaeremon's standing as an Alexandrian ambassador seems to be connected to his activity as an author, particularly his pro-Egyptian history of the Exodus. Chaeremon's Exodus account also receives vitriolic criticism from Josephus in the *Against Apion*.⁹ The social unrest in imperial Alexandria, where the struggle for Roman support led to tension and violence, creates similar templates for Apion and Chaeremon, who wrote texts disparaging Jews of the Exodus and represented Alexandrian citizens in an embassy to the emperor.

Where Apion broadcast culturally mixed Alexandrian expertise through an Egyptianized Homer, Chaeremon made a name for himself as a Stoic philosopher and exegete of Egyptian priestly life.¹⁰ His central position in Alexandrian intellectual culture, bolstered through his grammatical knowledge and his repute as a philosopher, helped him move to Rome in 48 CE, when he became Nero's tutor at the request of Nero's mother Agrippina.¹¹ This privileged position brought Chaeremon even greater renown and solidified his epithet "the Stoic." When the Roman epigrammatist Martial cracked a joke at Chaeremon's expense, he used this moniker (*Chaeremon Stoice*, 11.56.1) to help his punchline land: given the miserable, poor life that Chaeremon had led (poor bedding, gnats, unwarmed hearth, black

7. For text, see Smallwood (1967, n370). Łukaszewicz (1998) explains Claudius's response through his familial connections to Egypt.

8. Most (Stuart Jones 1926, 18; van der Horst 1984, ix; *ad T* 5; and Osgood 2011, 65) agree that the Chaeremon listed is the same as Chaeremon the philosopher-priest. Several (Rodríguez 2007, 56; Keyser 2014, *ad loc.*) hedge their bets. The letter (P. Lond. VI 1912) mentions Chaeremon at line 17. Bilde (2006, 199) situates the letter in the social unrest that spanned from 38 CE (Apion's deputation) to 41 CE (Chaeremon's deputation).

9. Joseph. *Ap.* 1.288–93 = F 1, who suggests that Chaeremon closely followed Manetho's account, locating the Exodus under Amenhotep and his son Ramesses, which is a creative, but historically incorrect, lineage.

10. Chaeremon is a *philosophus*, and specifically a Stoic, in T 9, F 10, F 11. For Chaeremon's self-positioning as a philosopher and priest who performs to Roman expectations of Eastern wisdom, see Moyer (2011, 269–70).

11. Note that, as Barzanò (1985, 1987–88) and Frede (1989, 2075–76) make clear, Chaeremon was primarily a philosophical tutor. See also the discussion of Rodríguez (2007, 54–67), which takes the appointment as a point of departure for a larger account of Chaeremon's biography and Nero's connections to Egypt.

bread), Chaeremon's Stoic acceptance of death was far less impressive.¹² Porphyry and Eusebius, who also call Chaeremon a Stoic, are more generous. Porphyry ranks Chaeremon as a preeminent Stoic, and Eusebius claims that Chaeremon and Cornutus were the key sources of Greek allegoresis from whom the Alexandrian Christian Origen drew inspiration.¹³

Chaeremon actively leveraged his reputation as a philosopher to strengthen his claims to privileged knowledge of Egyptian priests. That composite expertise was critical to his intellectual authority and is indirectly reflected by the variety of titles ascribed to him. Chaeremon is variously called a Stoic, a philosopher, and a sacred scribe (*hierogrammateus*), the last an upper-level priestly position.¹⁴ This mixture of philosophical and priestly knowledge continues in his extant fragments, which present Egyptian priests in a deliberately philosophical vocabulary to harmonize Greek and Egyptian wisdom-seeking. There are questions about Chaeremon's cultural authority that crop up when he tries to naturalize a mixed philosopher-priest. One is forced to ask whether Chaeremon's philosophical portrait of Egyptian priestly life is an outsider, and ultimately Greek, image of an Egyptian knowledge tradition. That is something I will return to in chapter 6; for now, it is important to see how Chaeremon's domain of intellectual authority, as a Stoic philosopher and exegete of hieroglyphs and priestly wisdom, broadens the intellectual ambit of Aegyptiaca.

Astrology and Aegyptiaca's Other Cultural Exports

Chaeremon's specific interest in the mixed philosopher-priest broadens the areas of expertise associated with authors of Aegyptiaca like Manetho and Apion. When Chaeremon's work is kept in view, Egyptian priests shift from a shorthand for emic authority to real practitioners of a technical knowledge that Chaeremon suggests is equally central to Greek philosophical and Egyptian religious wisdom traditions. Jerome provides a valuable view onto Chaeremon's characterization of that technical knowledge: "Chaeremon the Stoic, a most eloquent man, says about the life of the ancient Egyptian priests that, laying aside all the business and cares of the world, they were always in the temple and they surveyed the nature and causes of things, and also the calculations of the stars."¹⁵ Chaeremon segues from the general contiguity of philosophers and priests to one specific intellectual tradition where they converge. Per Chaeremon, priests broadly contemplate "the nature and origin of the world" (*rerum naturas causasque*). But at least in Jerome's recapitulation,

12. Mart. 11.56 = T 10.

13. Porph. *Abst.* 4.8 = F 10; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.19.8 = T 9.

14. He is called a sacred scribe in T 6, F 4, F 12, F 13. Note that in Josephus's recapitulation of Chaeremon's Exodus account, Joseph and Moses are called *hierogrammateis*, which is meant to connote magical and prophetic expertise, on which see Catastini (2010).

15. Jerome *Jov.* 2.13 = F 11: Chaeremon stoicus, vir eloquentissimus, narrat de vita antiquorum Aegypti sacerdotum, quod omnibus mundi negotiis curisque postpositis semper in templo fuerint et rerum naturas causasque ac rationes siderum contemplati sint.

this broad and (in the case of Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*) generic title for philosophical investigation narrows into the contemplation of the stars. Even as one should not invest too much in Jerome's exact phrasing, this sequence is illustrative.

Within the general mixture of "contemplation" that allows Chaeremon to centralize the "philosopher-priest," astronomy is the specific discipline where Egyptian and Stoic technical traditions coalesce. This point of connection expands the intellectual domains that I have claimed belong to Aegyptiaca. The stars can provide a solid foundation on which to trace the interconnectedness of Egyptian and Greek approaches to technical knowledge.¹⁶ As one moves across the Hellenistic and imperial periods, this interconnection evolves into an entirely mixed tradition over which authors like Chaeremon exercised authority.

Astronomy and astrology loop in a wider set of Egyptians who wrote about Egypt's knowledge traditions.¹⁷ Authors of Aegyptiaca wielded an astrological expertise that guaranteed them popularity in Rome, where everyone from Tiberius to cheating housewives demanded accurate horoscopes.¹⁸ Two names in particular, the legendary and historically nebulous Nechepso and Petosiris, became synonymous with this kind of Egyptian astronomical authority. Their reputations were well established in the Roman-imperial world: Pliny cites them as informants in his discussion of astronomy; the epigrammatist Lucillius presents Petosiris as the yardstick against which subsequent astrologers measured themselves; Juvenal, in a fit of not uncharacteristic hyperbolic indignation, complains that Romans refused even to leave their houses unless Petosiris's text permitted it.¹⁹ Nechepso's and Petosiris's fame as Egyptian king and priest, respectively, lent them pharaonic bona fides on which their authority and popularity were built. In Porphyry's introduction to Ptolemy's *Apotelesmatica*, Petosiris is one of the "elders" (*presbuteroi*) who were foundational authors of astrology.²⁰ But the actual text that circulated under his name, the second-century BCE *Astrologoumena*, is clearly the product of a Hellenistic, Greek-language, culturally mixed tradition.²¹

16. The section of Méla et al. (2014) on the sciences (395–535, Marganne and Aufrère 2014 especially) is a good introduction to the intercultural scientific production of Alexandria.

17. Especially in Hellenistic Egypt (per Neugebauer 1975, 5), astrology and astronomy were closely connected, with the former as a practical application of the latter. Accurate horoscopes depended on geometric astronomy and the measurement of planetary movement, on which see Evans (1998, 343–44).

18. Cumont (1937) remains a helpful introduction, with a structure that connects the key astrological traditions with relevant source texts. His introduction (13–21) traces astrology's dissemination from Egyptian sources to its Greco-Egyptian practitioners in Alexandria.

19. Pliny: *HN* 2.88, 7.160; Lucillius: *Anth. Pal.* 11.164; Juvenal: 6.575–81.

20. On Porphyry's reconstruction of the astrological tradition, see Gundel (1966, 214).

21. Such is convincingly argued by Moyer (2011, 228–48), who locates the Petosiris and Nechepso material at the intersection of a longstanding indigenous astronomical tradition and intensifying contact between Babylonians, Egyptians, and Greeks in the Late, Ptolemaic, and early imperial periods. For dating of the Nechepso-Petosiris material, see Cramer (1954, 17–18). For an overview of Nechepso and Peto-

The Suda's entry on Petosiris gets the point across: "Petosiris, Egyptian, philosopher. Just like the Greeks and Egyptians he arranged *Selections on the Gods from the Sacred Books, Astrological Matters, and Concerning the Mysteries among the Egyptians*.²² This last text, which promised to publicize privileged knowledge kept hidden in Egypt, is the stuff of Aegyptiaca. It hews closely to the authority over Egyptian arcana that Manetho and Chaeremon claimed. The pithy label "Egyptian philosopher" dovetails with Chaeremon's own self-presentation as a Greek philosopher who had access to restricted spaces of Egyptian priestly knowledge.

Shifting to the stars moves Aegyptiaca outside and beyond the traditional boundaries imposed by the dictates of modern scholarship. Jacoby's collection of fragmentary historians is an invaluable repository for authors like Manetho, Apion, and Chaeremon. But its designation of Aegyptiaca depends in large part on Josephus and the specific context of intellectual antagonism between Jews and Egyptians of the imperial period. That is important background for Aegyptiaca, one that has shaped my own discussion of Apion and Chaeremon so far. But it is far from the only thematic mainstay for Aegyptiaca. Straying outside Jacoby brings in new mixed intellectual traditions that were integral to Aegyptiaca. Particularly through this frame of astrology, it is easier to see the wider list of Egyptian authors whose multiculturalism undergirded their intellectual output.

THE BALBILLI AND THE GREEK FACE OF EGYPTIAN AEGYPTIACA

Juvenal hates the weight that Romans assign to Egyptian astrologers. Amid the long-winded, misogynistic screed of his sixth satire, he singles out astrology for criticism:

Be mindful to avoid meeting the kind of woman . . . who will not go along when her husband seeks camp and home, *should she be recalled by Thrasyllus's numbers*. When it's her pleasure to be carried to the first milestone, the appropriate hour is chosen from a book. If the corner of her little eye itches when rubbed, she demands salves upon consultation with her horoscope. Should she be lying sick in bed, *no time is more fit for food than the one which Petosiris has given*.²³

siris more generally, see Gundel (1966, 27–36) (with astrological filiation at fig. 2), and for fragments, Riess (1892). See too Ray (1974), Neugebauer (1975, 567–68), Keyser (1994), and Zucker (2014, 417).

22. Suda π 1399 = T 1 *Nechepsonis et Petosiridis reliquiae* ed. Riess: Πετόσιρις, Αἰγύπτιος, φιλόσοφος, καθὰ Ἑλληνας καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι τὰς περὶ θεῶν διετάξατο ἐπιλογὰς ἐκ τῶν ἱερῶν βιβλίων, Ἀστρολογούμενα, καὶ Περί τῶν παρ' Αἰγυπτίους μυστηρίων. Note that there are textual problems in the passage, and Adler's (1928) edition of the Suda is preferable to Riess's (1892) edition of the Petosiris and Nechepso fragments.

23. Juv. 6.572–81: illius occursum etiam vitare memento / . . . quae castra viro patriamque petente / non ibit pariter numeris revocata Thrasylli. / ad primum lapidem vectari cum placet, hora / sumitur ex libro; si prurit frictus ocelli / angulus, inspecta genasi collyria poscit; / aegra licet iaceat, capiendi nulla videtur / aptior hora cibo nisi quam dederit Petosiris. Text is that of Clausen (1992).

To make his point, Juvenal names two astrologers popular among Romans. I have already mentioned Petosiris, *the* authority on horoscopes for Greeks and Romans.

The other name, Thrasyllus, opens up new terrain. Thrasyllus, like Chaeremon and Apion, was an Alexandrian elite whose expertise helped him advance to Rome, where he became the personal astrologer of the emperor Tiberius.²⁴ His reputation grew especially because, though Tiberius had long since banished the practice of astrology in Rome, Thrasyllus's cozy relationship with the emperor had shielded him from this blanket proscription.²⁵ He and Tiberius were attached at the hip after their meeting in Rhodes, where Thrasyllus finally persuaded Tiberius of his own ability as a prophetic astrologer. Suetonius, with his typical flair for the dramatic, tells of their meeting at Rhodes during Tiberius's self-imposed exile:

At that time Tiberius very much tested the astrologer Thrasyllus, whom he had attached to his retinue as a teacher of wisdom. Thrasyllus affirmed that when a ship was spotted good news was being brought—at the very moment when Tiberius had made up his mind to hurl Thrasyllus into the sea while they were taking a walk together, on the grounds that Thrasyllus was a liar and rash confidant in his secrets, what with things turning out adversely and against predictions.²⁶

The anecdote was popular enough that both Tacitus and Cassius Dio also mention the same basic story, even if the prophetic moment by which Thrasyllus saved himself differs across accounts.²⁷ As a bilingual inscription from Smyrna reveals, the subsequent friendship was close enough that Thrasyllus received Roman citizenship and became Tiberius Claudius Thrasyllus.²⁸ Thrasyllus charted a path that began in Alexandria, progressed through Greece, and ended in Rome. Like Apion's movement around Greece as a Homerist, Thrasyllus cemented an Alexandrian expertise that offered him paths of movement around Greece. But unlike Apion, Thrasyllus's Roman enfranchisement highlights the concrete importance of citizenship status for Alexandrians hoping to make a move to Rome.

Thrasyllus was a more prominent figure than many realize. According to Frederick Cramer, the preeminent scholar of Greco-Roman astrology, "Thrasyllus the Alexandrian must be considered not only as one of the most versatile, but also one

24. For background, see Gundel (1966, 148–51) and Tarrant (1993, 7–11).

25. On Tiberius's expulsion of 16 CE, see Tac. *Ann.* 2.27–32. Ripat (2011, esp. 122–23 on Thrasyllus and his son Balbillus) cautions against this traditional narrative (laid out by, e.g., Cramer 1954, 232–48) of blanket expulsion of astrologers. This is fair, though one might push back against her rigid distinction (123) between professional and amateur astrologer.

26. Suet. *Tib.* 14.4: Thrasyllum quoque mathematicum, quem ut sapientiae professorem contubernio admoverat, tum maxime expertus est affirmantem nave provisam gaudium afferri, cum quidem illum durius et contra praedicta cadentibus rebus ut falsum et secretorum temere conscium, eo ipso momento, dum spatiatur una, praecipitare in mare destinasset. Text is that of Kaster (2016).

27. For the anecdote, see Tac. *Ann.* 6.21 and Dio Cass. 55.11, with Krappé (1927) and Oliver (1980).

28. *CIL* 3.7107, and Tarrant (1993, 9).

of the most profound scholars of his era.²⁹ Thrasyllus's intellectual authority as an astrologer was rooted in an Egyptian self-presentation. His own work imitated the Nechepso/Petosiris material. The scholia to the above Juvenal passage call Thrasyllus "another Petosiris" to make explicit his Egyptian intellectual lineage.³⁰ Per the corpus of Greek astrological papyri: "Also regarding the seven-zoned planetary system Thrasyllus divides it according to the *paradosis* of Nechepso and Petosiris, as he himself says."³¹ This technical language easily distracts from Thrasyllus's Egyptian cultural signaling. Seven-zoned systems and *paradosis* are alienatingly technical. But this should not mask the ways in which Thrasyllus leverages an association with the exemplars of an Egyptian astrological tradition for social advancement in Rome.

Beyond astrology, Thrasyllus wore many hats. Plutarch offers evidence that is tantalizing and murky in equal measure. He mentions a Thrasyllus—from the Egyptian town Mendes—who wrote an *Aegyptiaca* that included fun facts about the Nile's stones:³² "Other stones are also produced in it that are called *kollôtes*. Swallows collect them at the time the Nile rises, and build the so-called Swallow Wall, which restrains the rush of the water and does not allow the land to be destroyed by the flood, as Thrasyllus records in his *Aegyptiaca*."³³

This is strange stuff.³⁴ It is challenging to square a swallow-oriented Thrasyllus with the astrological Thrasyllus I have been discussing so far. Stanley Burstein's entry in *Brill's New Jacoby* treats this Thrasyllus independently from and without reference to the astrologer. When faced only with the Plutarch anecdote, Burstein doubts the historicity of this Thrasyllus of Mendes.³⁵ Plutarch's specific ascription of the swallow anecdote to Thrasyllus is certainly uncertain. But when it is looped into the evidence available for the astrologer Thrasyllus, I am inclined to agree with Richard Tarrant, who suggests that an interest in the Nile was likely a part of the astrologer Thrasyllus's wide-ranging expertise.³⁶

29. Cramer (1954, 93).

30. Riess (1892, F 4).

31. CCAG VIII.3.100, ll. 19–20: διαλαμβάνει δὲ καὶ περὶ τῆς ἑπταζώνου κατὰ τὴν Πετοσίρεως καὶ Νεχεψῶ, ὡς αὐτὸς φησιν, παράδοσιν. The astrological fragments of Thrasyllus are also available in Tarrant (1993, 242–49).

32. This is the Thrasyllus discussed in *BNJ* 622 (Burstein 2015). Burstein doubts the historicity of this Thrasyllus.

33. Plut. *De Fluv.* 16.2 = *BNJ* 622 F 1 (Burstein 2015 for text and translation): γεννῶνται δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι λίθοι κόλλωτες καλούμενοι. τούτους κατὰ τὴν ἀνάβασιν τοῦ Νείλου συλλέγουσα χελιδόνες, κατασκευάζουσι τὸ προσαγορευόμενον Χελιδόνιον τείχος, ὅπερ ἐπέχει τοῦ ὕδατος τὸν ῥοῖζον, καὶ οὐκ ἔδει κατακλυσμῶι φθειρεσθαι τὴν χώραν, καθὼς ἴστορεῖ Θράσυλλος ἐν τοῖς Αἰγυπτιακοῖς.

34. Interestingly, it is not totally coming out of left field. Swallows that block up the Nile occur already in Pliny (*HN* 10.94), who does not cite a source.

35. Burstein (2015), who adduces as evidence the tenuous historicity of *all* authors cited in the *De Fluviiis* (on which see Cameron 2004, 127–34).

36. Tarrant (1993, 711).

Pliny the Elder offers evidence that bridges Thrasyllus's otherwise *outré* river-rock interests in Plutarch with his more securely attested astrological expertise. A passage on sea snakes and their poisonous bites in Pliny's *Natural History* includes the opinions that Thrasyllus had on the matter: "Thrasyllus reports that nothing is as good against snake bites as crabs, and that pigs bitten by snakes heal themselves by eating crabs, and that snakes are in torment when the sun is in Cancer."³⁷ This is even stranger, if wonderfully typical of Pliny. But odd claims about snake torture notwithstanding, this citation of Thrasyllus is more difficult to dismiss as a fabrication. The pivot toward Cancer and the zodiac connects up this discussion of crabs and snakes with the world of astrology, for which Thrasyllus was better known and more widely cited. The shared interest in animals and aquatic life puts the Plutarch and Pliny citations of Thrasyllus in the same general area. At the end of the day, the risk of circularity (using Pliny's Thrasyllus to confirm Plutarch's Thrasyllus, which bolsters Pliny's Thrasyllus) necessarily makes any mutual identification of these different Thrasylluses tentative.

But both Pliny's and Plutarch's citations of Thrasyllus are important nonetheless. There is risk on both sides—in rashly connecting these Thrasylluses together *and* in insistently isolating different Thrasylluses according to their area of expertise. Pliny shows just how messy and interconnected intellectual traditions like pharmacology and astrology were. Thrasyllus's astrological expertise was multifaceted enough to range into the specifics of crab remedies and snake torture. Plutarch's confident subsummation of the swallow-wall story under the generic category of *Aegyptiaca* is illustrative, even if its Thrasyllan authorship has been debated. The Plutarch passage reveals the heterogeneous anecdotes and intellectual domains that ancient authors arrayed under *Aegyptiaca*'s aegis. In other words, Plutarch's loose use of *Aegyptiaca* as a post hoc, catch-all term is precisely the point. Even if they were not originally a part of a text called *Aegyptiaca*, swallows and Nile rocks came to be two among many staves that propped up the generic label "Egyptian things."

To return to surer ground, Thrasyllus is most famous as a philosopher. As Juvenal's mention of "Thrasyllus's numbers" suggests, his expertise lay in between areas typically denoted by astrology and philosophy. His knowledge of the predictive power of numbers is owed to Pythagoreanism, a philosophical school whose interest in number theory was well-known in antiquity. In a similar vein, Thrasyllus canonized the works of the atomist Democritus and helped establish Democritus's debt to Pythagoreanism.³⁸ But Thrasyllus's most famous "canonization" stems from his expertise as a Platonist. He divided the Platonic corpus into groups of

37. Plin. *HN* 32.55: Thrasyllus auctor est nihil aequè adversari serpentibus quam cancos; sues percussas hoc pabulo sibi mederi; cum sol sit in cancro, serpentes torqueri.

38. Tarrant (1993, 95–107 for his specific tetralogies, 148–77 for Neopythagoreanism), though see also Cramer (1954) for intersections with his career as astrologer.

four. While this legacy might not sound impressive, Thrasyllus's tetralogies laid the foundation for the renaissance of Platonic philosophy in the early-imperial period. In short, Thrasyllus helped create the Platonic corpus we know today.³⁹ As in his astrological work, Thrasyllus's impact on the intellectual development of imperial philosophy is significant.⁴⁰

The heterogeneity of Thrasyllus's expertise across philosophy and astrology and (potentially) astro-pharma-herpetology has flown under the radar. He reveals two issues that have undercut the prevalence and recognizability of Aegyptiaca. First, different scholars focus on different elements of Thrasyllus's intellectual portfolio. As with Chaeremon, Thrasyllus ably moved between his philosophical and astrological expertise. But unlike Chaeremon, these two facets of Thrasyllus's authority have been discussed in two different disciplinary contexts that prioritize two different versions of Thrasyllus. The one is rooted in a Greco-Egyptian astrological tradition that reaches back to Petosiris. In the other, Thrasyllus's importance as a Platonic and Pythagorean philosopher puts him squarely in the domain of imperial Greek culture. The results of these two very different discussions of Thrasyllus and his work are unfortunate. While those who approach Thrasyllus solely from the perspective of the history of philosophy should not be expected to parse the cultural semantics of astrology, the partition of Thrasyllus's Alexandrian origins, astrological expertise, and contributions to Platonism has hidden the places where the multiculturalism and intellectual history of the imperial period intersect.

Thrasyllus is the first of three generations of Balbilli that leveraged a creolized Egyptian identity for both advancement up the ranks of Roman power and intellectual cachet as authors of Aegyptiaca. First Thrasyllus, then his son Tiberius Claudius Balbillus, and finally his great-granddaughter Julia Balbilla all deployed a mixed Greek and Egyptian identity, and all became personal confidants of the Roman emperor. There has been a stark disciplinary divide that has separated them from Manetho, Apion, Chaeremon, and others canonized by Jacoby. But both sides are equally important examples of how Aegyptiaca operated, the way it wove together cultural traditions, and the social advancement that it facilitated for its authors.

Like Father, Like Son: Tiberius Claudius Balbillus

Tiberius Claudius Balbillus, likely if not definitively Tiberius Claudius Thrasyllus's son, followed in his (putative) father's footsteps.⁴¹ The need for this string of

39. Here, I follow Tarrant (1993), who argues for Thrasyllus's impact on the Platonic corpus. Tarrant (11–17) defends Thrasyllus's potential role in establishing the tetralogies (per Diog. Laert. 3.56) in the face of scholarly arguments to the contrary.

40. The scholia to the above-quoted Juvenal passage (*ad* 6.576, Wessner 1931, 111) identify Thrasyllus as a preeminent Platonic philosopher.

41. I take a "monist" approach (following Cichorius 1927; Cramer 1954, 95; and Gundel 1966, 151) and identify one Balbillus out of the four different attestations listed in Stein et al. (1933–2015,

caveats is telling. The methodological nitty-gritty of piecing together a person's single biography from disparate attestations has erased multicultural identities and heterogeneous authority. Only those with a real stomach for imperial prosopography, where one argues about whether Balbillus "a" is the same as Balbillus "b," have waded into the different facets of Balbillus's biography and intellectual output. This has, quite literally, created different "Balbilli," whose careers and texts have been separated out from each other. So, for example, the authoritative compendium for such work, the *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*, lists four different Balbilli for the period between 40–60 CE, each of which emerges from a different cultural and political context.⁴² One was a prefect of Egypt. A different Balbillus was well-known for his astrological work. A third Balbillus had a diplomatic career as procurator under Claudius. Yet another Balbillus participated in the same Alexandrian deputation to Claudius as Chaeremon did.

The criteria that scholars have used to stitch together (or ravel out) these different Balbilluses minimize his heterogeneous expertise. Arthur Stein, the editor of the Balbillus entry in the *PIR*, argues that the bureaucrat of Egypt Balbillus cannot be the same as the astrologer Balbillus, largely because he thinks dabbling in astrology would be unseemly for a Roman official.⁴³ But as Hans-Georg Pflaum has shown, this denial of multivalent authority is entirely modern.⁴⁴ It is far from uncommon that somebody who was a bureaucrat in Egypt, with a position in the Library of Alexandria, would draw on those bona fides to write astrology. There is certainly good reason to be cautious before claiming that all attested Balbilluses of the 40s, 50s, and 60s CE are one and the same. But methodological caution easily slips into disciplinary value judgments (like Stein's) that erase multicultural authority.

It is important at the outset to clarify that, even if some elements of Balbillus's life are sketchy—whether our Balbillus is the son of Thrasyllus; whether the chronology allows our Balbillus to be the same as the Alexandrian ambassador of 41—there is a core and uncontested biography that locates him solidly in the domain of Aegyptiaca. According to both Tacitus and a dedicatory inscription from Ephesus, he was an official in Egypt in charge of "the sacred groves and all sacred locations in Alexandria and in all Egypt, and in charge of the museum and library in Alexandria, and high priest to Hermes of Alexandria."⁴⁵ The laundry list

PIR B 38, C 813). Even if one is more conservative and admits only that Balbillus was both an astrologer and prefect of Egypt (the argument preferred by Schwartz 1949, 46–47 and Pflaum 1960–1961, I.40), Balbillus would still be a participant in Aegyptiaca, as an author on Egypt with a biographical connection to Alexandria.

42. Stein et al. (1933–2015, *PIR* B 38, C 813). Note that this excludes the now common datum (included in his *OCD* entry, Scullard and Levick 2012) that Balbillus was Thrasyllus's son, on which see Tac. *Ann.* 6.22.4, below.

43. See also Stein (1933, 126–27), a standalone article that makes the same argument.

44. Pflaum (1960–1961, I.38–39).

45. Tac. *Ann.* 13.22 names Balbillus as the prefect of Egypt under Nero. For his posts in Alexandria listed in the dedicatory monument of Ephesus (I. Eph 3042), see the reconstruction of Smallwood

of appointments not only speaks to the power that a prefect of Egypt had as the representative of Rome. It also, like Manetho's, Apion's, and Chaeremon's similar appointments in the library and temples, became the basis for Balbillus's intellectual output. In this regard, it is essential to know that, other ambiguities notwithstanding, the same person was a prefect of Egypt and used that position to strengthen his legitimacy as an astrologer.

So this is what a biography of Balbillus likely looks like: some evidence for his early life in Alexandria appears in the same letter from Claudius to the Alexandrians that had mentioned Chaeremon.⁴⁶ In the letter, which is dated to 41 CE, Balbillus appears as an Alexandrian delegate who single-handedly received approval from a hesitant Claudius to erect a gold statue of the "Claudian August Peace."⁴⁷ The promise of a gold statue apparently launched Balbillus into a successful career and Claudius's good graces. As the Ephesus inscription outlines, he was awarded the illustrious *hasta pura* during Claudius's invasion of Britain in 43 CE and then took up an important position handling the various appeals that squabbling Greek city-states constantly made to Rome. Then came the final coup. Balbillus returned to Egypt, where Nero appointed him prefect from 55–59; the *praefectus Aegypti* was the head of Roman rule in Egypt and one of the most important positions in Roman administration. Because of the implicit threat that the position posed, the prefecture was restricted to equestrians and was tightly controlled by the emperor. Augustus had executed Gallus, the first Roman to oversee Egypt, after his power in Egypt threatened to eclipse Augustus's.

Balbillus apparently owed this extremely remunerative post to Agrippina, Claudius's wife and Nero's mother. Tacitus (*Ann.* 13.19–22) suggests that Agrippina gave Balbillus the post because he had helped smooth things over after Agrippina's first fight with Nero. Beyond his overarching position as prefect of Egypt, Balbillus advertised other key positions in Alexandrian intellectual culture: he was a high priest of Hermes and he oversaw the Library of Alexandria and Museum. Through this mélange of positions, the political and intellectual begin to blend together: Balbillus was the face of an external Roman administration

(1967, n261a). There is a lacuna in the dedication, but the posts in Alexandria are secure. For a restoration of the text that includes "Balbillus, son of Thrasylus," see Cichorius (1927, 104).

46. P. Lond. VI 1912. Due to dating issues, Schwartz (1949, 47) and Pflaum (1960–1961, I.40) prefer to identify this Alexandrian ambassador as an identically named father of our Balbillus. They do not believe that Balbillus could be a representative of Alexandria in 41 CE and the grandfather of Julia Balbilla, whose poems are firmly dated to 130 CE. I follow Rosenmeyer (2018, 142), and find this timeline possible, if Balbillus was relatively young as an ambassador and Julia Balbilla was roughly contemporary in age to her travel companions Hadrian and Vibia Sabina (and thus born sometime in the 70s or 80s CE).

47. P. Lond. VI 1912 lines 35–7 (Smallwood 1967, n370). Balbillus is mentioned (as Τιβέριος Κλαύδιος Βάρβιλλος) in the opening list of ambassadors in line 16 and is later singled out for the statue-request in line 35.

to Egyptians; to Romans, his connections to the library and to Egyptian temples explained his mastery of Egyptian astrological knowledge.⁴⁸

Just as his biography overlaps with the curriculum vitae of Chaeremon, his intellectual career imitated Thrasyllus's. He too gained fame as an astrologer. Tacitus touts the similarity of Thrasyllus and Balbillus. After his description of Thrasyllus's attachment to Tiberius, Tacitus concludes by remarking that Thrasyllus's son is a chip off the old block: "Naturally, that the reign of Nero was predicted by the son of this same Thrasyllus will be recalled in due course, lest I stray too far now from the present undertaking."⁴⁹

Balbillus was able to provide timely advice to Nero when a comet seemed to predict Nero's impending demise. Suetonius's sensationalist account of the episode implicates Balbillus in Nero's "creative" solution to this astrological conundrum: "Nero, anxious about that fact [that the comet presaged his death], decided on death for every particularly high-born person after he learned from the astrologer Balbillus that kings commonly averted such portents and cast them off of themselves onto the heads of nobles by slaughtering some illustrious person."⁵⁰ Balbillus provides an astronomical justification for Nero's tyrannical purge of Rome's elite. Through this justification, he leverages the practices of Hellenistic kings for the benefit of Nero and the still inchoate foundations of the principate. Balbillus, like other Alexandrian Egyptians, was able to deploy an expertise particularly well suited to the precarious position of the emperor. The practices of Ptolemaic dynasts provide the solutions to the problems faced by an emperor widely resented by senatorial elite. The same had been true with Thrasyllus and Tiberius, whose relationship was predicated upon Thrasyllus's ability to provide an Egyptian and celestial justification for the rule of an otherwise quite unpopular emperor. A clear connection emerges between Balbillus's particular skill set (using the stars to justify sole rule in Egypt) and Nero's famous devolvement into paranoid tyranny.

There is intriguing, if scanty, evidence that Balbillus's intellectual activity ventured beyond astrology. According to Seneca, Balbillus also discussed the wonders that he saw in Egypt. In the *Naturales Quaestiones*, a Stoic account of nature that includes a lengthy description of the Nile, Seneca cites Tiberius Claudius Balbillus as witness and chronicler of an unbelievable fight between dolphins and crocodiles. The incredibility of the episode (a pitched battle between species) continues the animal wonders that had been the stock in trade of Apion. Apion's Greek perspective on Egypt's wonders was proof, in Gellius's eyes, of Apion's mastery of

48. Cumont (CCAG VIII.4.234 n. 1, ll. 3, 10, 233) makes precisely this argument, presenting Balbillus's reliance on Egyptian months as evidence of his attempts to cement his position as an expert in the Egyptian astrological tradition.

49. Tac. *Ann.* 6.22.4: quippe a filio eiusdem Thrasulli praedictum Neronis imperium in tempore memorabitur, ne nunc incepto longius abierim. Text is Heubner (1994).

50. Suet. *Ner.* 36.1: anxius ea re, ut ex Balbillo astrologo didicit, solere reges talia ostenta caede aliqua illustri expiare atque a semet in capita procerum depellere, nobilissimo cuique exitium destinavit.

Greek culture.⁵¹ The same is true in the case of Balbillus. When Seneca cites Balbillus's story, he calls him "Balbillus, the best of men, singularly expert in every type of study."⁵² The obvious flattery should not mask Seneca's ascription of polymathy to Balbillus. However fleeting, this animal anecdote creates a connection between Balbillus and Apion that recenters animal paradoxography as yet another stave supporting Aegyptiaca.

Through Balbillus, one begins to see how Egypt was both an intellectual font of astrology and a politically important site for the ideological defense of the emperor.⁵³ This combination of the political and the intellectual is secure, even if some elements of Balbillus's biography are subject to disagreement. The hazards of prosopography and the asterisks it requires us to place on reconstructed biographies should not hide that which the available evidence *does* illustrate: that Balbillus was both a bureaucrat who occupied important posts in Alexandria and the inheritor of a culturally mixed intellectual tradition whose Egyptian prestige was vouchsafed by Nechepso and Petosiris. These two facets of Balbillus's career undergird the wider importance of Aegyptiaca as a politically motivated, colonially framed, multicultural intellectual tradition.

Memnon in Creolization: Julia Balbilla and the Poetics of Aegyptiaca

Tiberius Claudius Balbillus's granddaughter, the Hadrianic poet Julia Balbilla, also offers valuable (if biased) proof of her grandfather's intellectual achievements. In one poem, she refers to her grandfather as "Balbillus the wise." The medium is more important than the message. The reference to her grandfather comes from the set of four epigrams she—like so many other visitors to the statue—carved onto the base of the statue of Memnon.⁵⁴ The inscribed epigrams were made during the visit of Hadrian and his wife Vibia Sabina to Thebes in 130 CE. Julia Balbilla, like her grandfather and great-grandfather, was closely tied to the emperor and his wife, with whom she traveled as they made their way around the empire. She is an imperial Greek poet whose high valuation of archaism and the classical past fit in well with Hadrian's noted philhellenism.⁵⁵ Writing in the second century CE, she binds the Greco-Egyptian mixture constitutive of Aegyptiaca to the prac-

51. Most notably, his tales of Androcles and the lion (*BNJ* 616 F 5) and of the boy and the dolphin (F 6). For Gellius's discussion of Apion's learnedness, see chapter 1.

52. Sen. *Nat. Quaest.* 4a.2.13: Balbillus, virorum optimus perfectusque in omni litterarum genere rarissima. . . . Text is Oltramare (1961).

53. My own emphasis on this Egyptian astrological tradition and its popularity in Rome is not meant to discount the importance of the other cultures (the Chaldeans/Babylonians, most notably) whose astronomical traditions influenced Egyptian, Hellenistic, and Roman astronomy.

54. For cultural and literary analysis of the epigrams (including their panegyric of Hadrian, debt to the epigrammatic tradition, and exemplification of imperial-era classicism), see above all Rosenmeyer (2018, 141–69). See too Edmonds (1925), Ippolito (1996), Brennan (1998), and Sonnino (2016).

55. Rosenmeyer (2018, 155–57) (cf. 2008, 347–52) collocates these archaisms and Aeolicisms.

tice of imperial Hellenism and the ever-widening territory denoted by the term Second Sophistic.⁵⁶

Balbilla offers a face of Hellenism that cannot be disassociated from the range of other eastern Mediterranean traditions with which it is bound up. Her ancestry is Commagene on her father's side and Egyptian through her maternal line, which stretches back to Balbillus. In both her Egyptian and Commagene heritage, there is a thoroughly blended Greekness. The Hellenistic kingdom of Commagene, in southeastern Asia Minor, was a site of mixture between Greek, Syrian, and Parthian cultures.⁵⁷ As in Ptolemaic Egypt, Numidian North Africa, and so many other places in the Hellenistic Mediterranean, Commagene upper elite adopted a Greek cosmopolitanism. They looped themselves into the Hellenistic world through "glocal" Hellenizing material culture and marriage with other mixed Greek elite.⁵⁸ Balbilla stands at the end of a long process through which Greece was embedded into and coextensive with a range of other cultural contexts. As such, she helps reveal that creolization is not a teleological synthesis that produces one set type of mixed identity. Her adroit use of her Greek, Egyptian, and Commagene backgrounds—and the way those backgrounds support her own elite social position—reflect well the double-edged history of creolization, which is a type of cultural mixture wielded specifically by elites. Balbilla's identity is indissociably Greek and Egyptian, even as it is distinct from her grandfather's similarly indissociable combination of Greek and Egyptian backgrounds.

Balbilla sits atop the porous boundary separating Aegyptiaca from cognate genres. Balbilla's Egyptian identity is secure, even as she was likely a visitor to rather than resident of Egypt. Her poetry, inscribed on Memnon, is at once very deliberately not available to a wide external readership and composed with a targeted non-Egyptian audience of two in mind—Hadrian and Vibia Sabina. Her only partial participation in the definition of Aegyptiaca I have defended so far provides real stakes to the otherwise abstract challenges posed by a coherently incoherent tradition. Through Balbilla, one must hold onto, but not grip too tightly, the categories Egyptian, Egyptian traditions, and external audience that constitute Aegyptiaca. Balbilla is an Egyptian positioning herself as a translator addressing Memnon on behalf of a non-Egyptian audience. She arrogates authority via a performance of emic knowledge of Egyptian geography and religion. She thus

56. Philostratus, the originator of the term (*VS* 1 pref. 481), was denoting the rise of epideictic oratory, on which see Schmitz (1997, 13–14) and Whitmarsh (2001, 41–44; 2005, 4–5). But the term has come to describe almost all imperial Greek intellectual culture (cf. Johnson and Richter 2017).

57. This mixing of Greek and local cultural traditions is also evident in Antiochus I and his funerary and religious program at Nemrud Dağ, discussed by Versluys (2017b, 108–84).

58. The collected essays in Quinn and Prag (2013) (particularly Fentress 2013 and Quinn 2013) shine a light on this dynamic. For "glocal" as a denotation of the mixture of the local and the globalizing, see the defense of the term by Robertson (1995).

continues in the spirit of *Aegyptiaca*, while still interweaving elements of inscribed verse epigram that cannot be easily folded into the practice of *Aegyptiaca*.

The four poems she left on the statue offer rare evidence for inscribed verse epigram written by a woman. She deploys Aeolicisms and invocations of the Muses to put her own elegiac stamp on Sapphic poetry and the tradition of classical lyric.⁵⁹ She trades in similar tropes of the immortality of subject and poet through poetry. Her reuse of the poetry-as-monument theme plays on the poem's placement on the statue of Memnon, the eternal monument par excellence. This reception of Sappho and lyric poetry by imperial-era women like Julia Balbilla is a fascinating story well-discussed by scholars like Emily Hemelrijk and Patricia Rosenmeyer.⁶⁰

The poem also displays how Julia Balbilla uses the figure of Memnon to celebrate a constellation of Greek and Egyptian cultures that is central to her own sense of self as granddaughter of a mixed Greco-Egyptian person. One poem, written for Vibia Sabina, draws this in clear colors:

When I was beside Memnon with the Lady Sabina:
 Memnon, son of Dawn and old Tithonus,
 Sitting opposite Thebes, Diospolis,
 Or alternatively Amenothe, Egyptian king, as Egyptian priests
 who know ancient lore name him,
 Hello! In singing may you eagerly welcome her,
 The august wife of the emperor Hadrian.
 A barbarian cut off your tongue and ears,
 That godless Cambyses; with a baneful death
 He paid the penalty, struck by the tip of the same sword
 With which he pitilessly slew the divine Apis.
 But I don't believe that this statue of yours could be destroyed,
 And I henceforth keep in my mind a soul forever immortal.
 For my parents and grandparents were reverent,
 Balbillus the wise and king Antiochus,
 The former the father of my kingly mother,
 And king Antiochus, father of my father.
 From them I too obtained noble blood,
 And these verses are my own, Balbilla the reverent.⁶¹

59. The specific coordination of Aeolic Greek and elegiac distichs is a rare combination whose significance Rosenmeyer (2008, 351–55) has investigated. She demonstrates that Balbilla's debt to Sappho is far from straightforward.

60. Hemelrijk (1999, 113–14, 157–63) and Rosenmeyer (2008 and 2018, 159–68). Cf. also Bowie (1990, 61–66).

61. 29 (ed. Bernard and Bernard 1960, 86–92): Ὅτε σὺν τῇ Σεβαστῇ Σαβεινῇ ἐγενόμην παρὰ τῷ Μέμνονι. Αὖτως καὶ γεράρω, Μέμνον, πάι Τιθώνοιο, / Θηβίας θάσσων ἄντα Δίος πόλιος, / ἢ Ἀμένωθ, βασιλεὺς Αἰγύπτου, τὼς ἐνέποισιν / ἴρηες μύθων τῶν παλῶν Ἰδριες, / χαίρει, καὶ αὐδάσαις πρόφρων ἀσπάσθη[ο κ] αὐτ[αν] / τὰν σέμναν ἄλοχον κοιράνω Ἀδριάνω. / Γλωσσάν μὲν τοι τμᾶξε [κ]αὶ ὤματα βάρβαρος ἄνηρ, / Καμβύσαις ἄθεος· τῷ ῥά λύγρω θαγάτῳ / δῶκέν τοι ποίαν τῷτῳ ἄκ[ρω] ἄορι πλάγεις / τῷ νήλας Ἄπιν κάκτανε τὸν θεῖον. / Ἄλλ' ἔγω οὐ δοκίμωνι σέθεν τόδ' ὄλεσθ' ἂν ἀγαλμα, /

The epigram opens with a creative mixture of mythological and historical background that is the bread and butter of *Aegyptiaca* in its narrower, history-writing valence. She names Memnon first in his Greek mythological guise, as the heroic son of Eos and Tithonus who went off to fight in Troy in the now-lost *Aethiopsis*. She then pivots to an Egyptian historical frame, naming Memnon as Amenoth, an Egyptian king. Memnon thus bridges Egyptian-historical and Greek-mythological realms and binds them together into one identity. A classicizing Memnon cedes the floor to a flexible mythological system that naturalizes multiple identities.⁶² From the outset of the poem Julia proves that traditional mechanisms of appropriating Greekness—like using stylized dialecticisms—exist alongside, rather than compete against, the poem’s celebration of a specifically Egyptian form of archaism.⁶³

The poem’s opening puts this cultural pluralism front and center. The first sentence offers up two different names for the same person, one Greek and one Egyptian. In doing so, Julia Balbilla poeticizes polyonymy. The social reality of Egypt incentivized name-changing among its population. Egyptians took on Greek names for social advancement into Greek positions. Similarly, Greeks moved between names to navigate the different legal and tax systems that had been set up for the Greek and Egyptian inhabitants of Egypt.⁶⁴ Julia Balbilla repurposes polyonymy from a quotidian part of social life in Egypt into a tool for broad mythological and cultural translation. Memnon, like authors of *Aegyptiaca* who move between Egyptian and Greek cultural frames, yokes together different traditions. Julia Balbilla’s inclusion of both Memnon and Amenoth underlines her authority over both Greek and Egyptian reference points.

Memnon/Amenoth is the first example of a poetics of translation that runs throughout the poem. This translation takes place on multiple levels. Most basically, Balbilla offers different words that denote the same person or place. So, for example, she provides both an emic and an etic name for Thebes. First she chooses the etic term “Thebes,” a name that had no traction within Egypt but was commonly used outside it. She soon provides an emic gloss, using the internal and administratively accurate name Diospolis. The latter is a closer Greek translation of the city’s Egyptian name, “The city of Amun” (*njwṯ-Jmn*). Through Diospolis, the Egyptian semantics of city (*njwṯ*) are translated into Greek (*polis*) and a god’s identity is translated from Egyptian (Amun) to Greek (Zeus/Dios). Even if

ψύχαν δ’ ἀθανάταν λοιπὸν ἔσωσα νόψ. / Εὐσέβεις γὰρ ἔμοι γένηται πάπποι τ’ ἐγένοντο, / Βάλβιλλος τ’ ὁ σόφος κ’ Ἀντίοχος βασιλευς, / Βάλβιλλος γενέταις μᾶτρος βασιλῆϊδος ἄμμας, / τῷ πάτερος δὲ πάτηρ Ἀντίοχος βασιλευς· / κήνων ἐκ γενέας κᾶγω λόχον αἶμα τὸ κάλον, / Βαλβιλλας δ’ ἔμιθεν γρόπτα τάδ’ εὐσέβε[ος].

62. In this regard, I am building on the observation of Rosenmeyer (2008, 350) that Balbilla’s mixed background colors her otherwise typically Second-Sophistic penchant for mastering genealogies and mythologies.

63. For example, Αὔως, τῶς, and πᾶι Τιθώνοιο. Rosenmeyer (2018, 158) notes the interconnection of linguistic archaism and this Egyptian genealogy of Memnon.

64. A phenomenon well discussed in Coussement (2016), who restricts herself to the Ptolemaic period.

Diospolis is in some ways “authoritative” within Egypt, this denotation of Diospolis as “emic” might rankle: even the Egyptian version of Thebes is Greek. It is worth acknowledging the changing terrain on which I am positioning “emic” and “etic.” Julia Balbilla, residing in the second century, shows the limits of categories like “interior” and “exterior” and “emic” and “etic.” Balbilla’s poetry provokes competing desires. On the one hand, I want to acknowledge that an emic and culturally authoritative explanation can use a Greek word. On the other, it is important to admit that Diospolis points to an act of erasure, through which the Egyptian term (*njwṯ-Jmn*) is given no space in Balbilla’s specific alternation between an Egyptian (but Greek language) Diospolis and a non-Egyptian (but *still* Greek language) Thebes. Balbilla’s act of translation is messy, but a translation nonetheless.⁶⁵

The alternation of Memnon and Amenoth also represents a redrawing of “authoritative” and “exterior.” I mentioned the broad cultural translation between historical/Egyptian and mythological/Greek. But the specific denotation of “Amenoth” deserves attention.⁶⁶ As in the Thebes/Diospolis pair, the interior and “Egyptian” alternative is rendered in Greek. The Egyptian Amenoth and Greek Memnon are both written in Greek, even as Memnon is “etic” and imposed from outside and Amenoth is emic and marked out as an authoritative Egyptian identification. But where Diospolis translates, Amenoth transliterates. The transliterated Amenoth allows the Egyptian referent, its Egyptian sound, to remain intact in ways distinct from the thoroughgoing translation between Amun’s town and Zeus’s polis. Transliteration is an elusively simple translational strategy. Amenoth, like transliteration more broadly, is an asymptote that approaches but never fully crosses the boundaries delineating inherited pharaonic culture. The placement of the poem on an object which so obviously *did* include Egyptian-language texts amplifies this interplay between the emic authority of names transliterated from Egyptian to Greek (Amenoth), that transliteration’s role in cross-cultural syncretism (Memnon/Amenoth), and that syncretism’s distance from the pharaonic presentation of a king’s name in hieroglyphic in a cartouche (*Nebmaatre Amenhetep*).

In a basic sense, Balbilla’s Egyptian identification of Memnon as Amenoth is correct, however troublesome that word might be. The statue in question was originally a funerary monument for the Eighteenth-Dynasty king Amenhotep III (Greek *Amenôphthis*, Egyptian *nb-m³t-r^ʿ Jmn-htp*) that stood in front of his now-lost mortuary temple on the west bank in Thebes. Balbilla’s ability to elucidate this background and identify the statue as this Egyptian king is more impressive than it looks. Very few references to any Amenhotep exist in Greek literature.⁶⁷ None comes before Manetho, who first names him as a king of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

65. It thus shares in the same dynamics of translation that animate Pliny’s *osiritis-cynocephalia* gloss (chapter 1).

66. Rosenmeyer (2018, 18n48) notes the authors who make this identification. In poem 31.2, Balbilla switches to Phamenoth (Φαμένωθ), likely confusing king with month.

67. References are rare; Pausanias makes the link after Julia Balbilla. Other mentions (Dorotheus of Sidon, Thessalus, and Plutarch) are for the Egyptian month Φαμένωθ, not the king.

Then Chaeremon and Josephus pick him up, when the Exodus story was often slotted into the Eighteenth Dynasty.⁶⁸ But these are the only references until Julia Balbilla. The type of knowledge that is associated with Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* and learned expositions of Egyptian traditions are on display in Julia Balbilla's poetry, even as she is never associated with Manetho or with the authoritative exposition of "rubber-stamped" Egyptian history accessed via Egyptian priests.⁶⁹ Balbilla's ability to identify Amenhotep as Amenhotep rather than Memnon substantiates these claims to authoritative sources.

After this initial display of translation between Greek and Egyptian frames, the poem uses the language of barbarism to align Greece and Egypt on one side against the Persian Cambyses. Balbilla reemphasizes a tradition that reaches back to Herodotus, where Cambyses's invasion of Egypt is folded into the larger narrative of Greece's fight with Persia. An Egyptian/Persia antipathy that contrasts an impious, Apis-bull-slaughtering, Memnon-defacing barbarian Cambyses with norms of Egyptian religiosity bleeds into a different binary, one between a Greek self and a Persian other.⁷⁰ The structure of Herodotus's *Histories* yokes these two different Persian barbarisms together: Persia is simultaneously the reviled invader of Egypt and of mainland Greece. Greece and Egypt blur into each other through their common enemy.

In other words, when Cambyses defaces the statue and cuts off its ears and nose, he is committing a sacrilege against both the Egyptian Amenhotep and the Greek mythological Memnon. An external barbarian cements the interconnection of Greek and Egyptian identities that is applicable to Memnon and Balbilla alike. Balbilla reapproaches a very classical theme (Persia as a foil through which to define Greekness) and underlines its potential for a world in creolization. Cambyses's barbarism paves the way for the poem's denouement. Balbilla reassures Memnon that she is reverent in all the ways that Cambyses, who murdered Egypt's sacred cow and defaced Memnon, was not. She vouchsafes her reverence through the broad and culturally plural background that she proceeds to cite. Not least, she is uniquely appreciative of Memnon because of her grandfather Balbillus. This reverence, in the confines of the poem, is suitably fuzzy. It is narrowly a declaration of piety, a rejection of Cambyses's cruelty. But her piety is introduced by, and then leads to, the culturally plural background of addressee and author alike. As Patricia Rosenmeyer has persuasively argued, Balbilla's arrogation of nobility and reverence emerges directly from her appreciation of Memnon's and Thebes's different names.⁷¹

68. Joseph. *Ap.* 1.288–93 = Chaeremon F 1.

69. 29 ed. Bernand and Bernand: τὼς ἐνέποισιν / ἴρηες μύθων τῶν παλάων ἰδριες.

70. Depuydt (1995) seeks to move beyond a Herodotean view of Cambyses as Apis-slaughtering madman (3.27–33) to Egyptian evidence, most of which paints him as a fine inheritor of pharaonic practices, including properly burying (rather than murdering) the Apis bull. That does not erase his legacy in Greek literature as an external ruler who aligned himself against, rather than naturalized his power through, Egyptian culture.

71. Rosenmeyer (2018, 158–59).

The address, then, represents a broad mandate of cross-cultural appreciation. Memnon, as half-ruined monument grandly standing near Thebes, becomes the patron god of mixture and of interconnected Greek and Egyptian intellectual traditions.

PANCRATES'S MANY FACES: TOWARD
A METHODOLOGY OF CREOLE AEGYPTIACA

Julia Balbilla is not the only author of *Aegyptiaca* to deploy Egyptian culture to praise Hadrian. Per Athenaeus, Pancrates was “a poet, one of the inhabitants of Alexandria.”⁷² Like Chaeremon and Tiberius Claudius Balbillus, Pancrates had a position in the Museum that he was able to secure by flattering the emperor. The successful bit of flattery is preserved in Athenaeus: when walking with Hadrian in Alexandria, Pancrates pointed out a red lotus. He then claimed that the red lotus grew out of the ground because of the blood spilled by a lion killed by Hadrian and his lover Antinous in a hunt they had undertaken the previous year. Pancrates suggested the flower be named “Antinoeis” in honor of Hadrian’s beloved, which charmed Hadrian and secured Pancrates a comfortable job. Pancrates’s typically Alexandrian mode of learned sycophancy complemented his other work, which mixed together Greek and Egyptian traditions.

Athenaeus’s different citations of Pancrates bear out this mixture.⁷³ In two different passages Athenaeus names two texts written by Pancrates: one is an epic poem on Bakenrenef, a famed Egyptian king.⁷⁴ Bakenrenef was one of the last pharaonic kings before the Persian occupation, a position that explains both his reputation among later Egyptians as a paragon of good rule and the pessimistic prophecies of coming destruction that are associated with his reign.⁷⁵ The other text is an epyllion that narrates Hadrian’s apparently well-known Libyan lion hunt. Both poems were indebted to both Greek and Egyptian perspectives. His epic poem on Bakenrenef further combined authentically Egyptian annalistic history with an Herodotean discourse on Egyptian kings.⁷⁶ His lion-hunt epyllion participated both in a slender aesthetic long associated with Alexandrian poetry and in pharaonic traditions of royal hunts.

72. Ath. *Deipn.* 15.21 = *BNJ* 625 T 1: Παγκράτης τις τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ποιητής.

73. Athenaeus’s Alexandrian and Hellenizing portrait of Pancrates builds on his similar treatment of Apion, which I discuss in chapter 1.

74. Markiewicz (2008) lays out the different (and often contradictory) associations Greek and Roman authors made with Bakenrenef.

75. Most famously, the Prophecy of the Lamb alluded to both in Manetho and in a different Greek-language Egyptian annalistic history (P. Lips. Inv. 590 and 1228, with Popko and Rucker 2011). For text and translation, see respectively Zauzich (1983) (cf. Chauveau’s 2017 reedition and discussion) and Simpson (2003, 445–49). For introduction, see Quack (2009, 176–78), and for more in-depth discussion, see Thissen (1998 and 2002), who situates it in the pessimistic and apocalyptic literary traditions.

76. Bakenrenef is mentioned (as Βόκχωρις/Βόκχορις) four times by Diodorus (1.45.2, 65.1, 79.1, 94.5, with Markiewicz 2008, 313–14) and four times by Plutarch (*Vit. Demetr.* 27.11, 13, *DIO* 354b, *De vit. pud.* 529e).

Very little from either work survives. A traditional interest in now-fragmentary authors would dictate that scholars try to systematically reconstruct now-lost work from the fragments that are extant.⁷⁷ That is nearly impossible with Pancrates, given the absolute paucity of surviving fragments. But that does not mean that Pancrates is unimportant. Pancrates's individual texts might be sketchy in their details, but his cross-cultural intellectual output is still securely attested. This fact of culturally plural polymathy can be a complementary object of scholarly focus for fragmentary authors poorly served by the "here's how his work would have looked like" approach.

Pancrates amplifies a central argument of this chapter: that an otherwise dry prosopographic process of linking attestations is a necessary prerequisite for a broader reevaluation of the breadth and range of expertise of culturally mixed Alexandrians. The latter requires the former. Juxtaposing the different cultural traditions signposted by different fragments plays to the strengths of these authors' haphazard state of preservation in ways that a reconstructive approach cannot. Aegyptiaca's importance as an ongoing literary tradition only comes to the fore by synoptically surveying the generic range of its authors' literary activity. One might not know with absolute precision the details of any one of these activities. But one *can* know that Pancrates's authority circumscribed them all.

The Pancrates discussed by Athenaeus wrote an epyllion in honor of Hadrian and Antinous and an epic poem on a famed Egyptian king. That is all that is included in the Pancrates canonized in Jacoby.⁷⁸ But there are other contexts for Pancrates: he is mentioned both by the humorist Lucian and in the corpus of magical texts collected under the label "Greek Magical Papyri" (*PGM*). The magician Pancrates who appears in the *PGM* shares many of the same features of the Pancrates discussed by Athenaeus.⁷⁹ Purely on the basis of dating, the magician Pancrates is a very near contemporary of Athenaeus's Pancrates. Pancrates's encounter with Hadrian in Athenaeus is firmly dated to 130 CE; the specific text—the Paris Magical Papyrus—that mentions the magician Pancrates is a compendium that is excerpting from an original work reliably dated to the mid-second century CE.⁸⁰ Even more convincingly, the magician Pancrates also fields a meeting with Hadrian in Egypt, which would sync up the two Pancrateses to the year.

77. This has been called a "bio-bibliographic approach," whose origins are well outlined by Dionisotti (1997). Gumbrecht (1997, 316–18) traces this scholarly trend back to c. 1800 and the romanticization of ruins, which provide a material foundation to complementary processes of imagination and "restitution" (323) of fragments' original whole.

78. Burstein (2016), who only includes these two passages—one as testimonium, one as fragment.

79. Stanley Burstein (2016 *ad T 1*) argues for the "probable identification" of Athenaeus's Pancrates with these two other attestations.

80. For *Quellenforschung* on the Paris Magical Papyrus, see Preisendanz and Henrichs (1973–1974, 64–65) and LiDonnici (2003, 144, esp. n10). Kuster (1911) first proposed a second century CE original on which the surviving codex was based.

The relevant section of the larger magical compendium discusses a spell of attraction. As the text promises, the spell “inflicts sickness excellently and destroys powerfully, sends dreams beautifully, accomplishes dream revelations marvelously and in its many demonstrations has been marveled at for having no failure in these matters.”⁸¹ In the narrative flow of the text, Pancrates is a practitioner who proves the spell’s potency and accuracy in a demonstration to Hadrian:

... Pachrates, the prophet of Heliopolis, revealed the power of his own divine magic to the emperor Hadrian. For the spell attracted in one hour; it made someone sick in two hours; it destroyed in seven hours, and sent the emperor himself dreams as he thoroughly tested the whole truth of the magic within Pachrates’s power. And marveling at the prophet, he ordered double fees to be given to him.⁸²

The opening phrase contains two striking differences from Athenaeus’s Alexandrian Pancrates. First, the name itself is spelled differently: this magician is Pachrates, not Pancrates. The change is a subtle but nevertheless illustrative tweak in transliteration. The Egyptian name that is typically transliterated as Pancrates is *p³-hrrd*, “the one who belongs to the (Horus) child.”⁸³ To make the name legible to a wider audience, the Greek spelling “Pancrates” opted for a much looser adaptation: the Egyptian definite article *p³* becomes the unrelated, but well-known Greek prefix “pan;” the Egyptian sound “*h*” turns into a kappa to render the well-known and semantically attested suffix -krates. In other words, social comprehensibility is the priority. The translation to Pancrates moves the name further from its Egyptian equivalent, but fits in more naturally as a Greek name with Greek semantics: to put it crudely, it is a name that means something in its Greek version. The magical papyri transliterate, rather than translate, the Egyptian name. “Pachrates” directly transliterates the definite article *p³* and more accurately denotes the Egyptian sound *h* with the more phonically accurate suffix -chrates. In the cultural context of magical papyri, which like astrology were a mixed Greco-Egyptian tradition, Pachrates can be referred to with a name that is Greek in spelling but still Egyptian in meaning. Pancrates/Pachrates is a small variation that speaks volumes about the socio-linguistic work at play in rendering Egyptian people’s names in different Greek versions in different cultural contexts.

81. Translation from Betz (1986). Text and numeration from Preisendanz and Henrichs 1973–1974. *PGM* IV.2443–6: κατακλίνει γενναίως και ἀναρεί ἰσχυρῶς, ὄνειροπομπεὶ καλλίστως, ὄνειραιτητὲ θαυμαστῶς και ἐν πλείσταις ἀποδείξεισιν ἐθαυμάσθη οὐδεμίαν ἔγκλισιν ἔχουσα τούτων.

82. *PGM* IV.2449–55: Παχράτης, ὁ προφήτης Ἡλιουπόλεως, Ἀδριανῶ βασιλεὶ ἐπιδεικνύμενος τὴν δύναμιν τῆς θείας αὐτοῦ μαγείας. ἤξεν γὰρ μονόωρον, κατέκλινεν ἐν ὥραις β', ἀνείλεν ἐν ὥραις ζ', ὄνειροπόμησεν δὲ αὐτὸν βασιλεῖα ἐκδο<κ>μ<ά>ζοντος αὐτοῦ τὴν ὅλην ἀλήθειαν τῆς περὶ αὐτὸν μαγείας· καὶ θαυμάσας τὸν προφήτην διπλᾶ ὀψώνια αὐτῷ ἐκέλευσεν δίδοσθαι.

83. For this change, see Preisendanz (1942, 2072); cf. Lüddeckens (1983, 211; 1986, 411). As they note, this variation between Pancrates and Pachrates is relatively common in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt.

Second, different toponyms connect Pancrates to different places to underline different areas of expertise. To denote Pancrates's bona fides as a magician, the magical papyrus claims he is from Heliopolis, a city in the Delta synonymous with inherited traditions around Egyptian religion ever since its importance as the cult center of Old-Kingdom solar religion.⁸⁴ To denote Pancrates's status as a Greek poet, Athenaeus claims he is from Alexandria. This distinction speaks more obviously to the way that places of origin (Heliopolis, Alexandria) are used as fungible frames through which to view an author's authority and expertise. The same was true for Manetho, who was a resident of Alexandria but whose expertise in Egyptian culture was underlined by his position as a priest of Heliopolis.⁸⁵ These places of origin and areas of authorial expertise reinforce each other. Pancrates's residency in Alexandria (in Athenaeus) and Heliopolis (in the magical papyri) are invoked to highlight his Greek and Egyptian expertise, respectively. But these different areas of expertise also are used to reconfirm circularly that Alexandria should be associated with Greek culture and Heliopolis with Egyptian culture. This choice of Pancrates's origin is not a static or stable historical fact. It is a signifier of identity that was flexible and responsive to generic context: a thumb pin on Glissant's conceptual map of creolization.

Beyond the different vantages onto Pancrates offered by these variations in name and place of origin, the spell hews remarkably closely to the biographical precis that Athenaeus offered. According to Athenaeus, Pancrates's offer to name a red lotus after Antinous had impressed the emperor enough to secure Pancrates a comfortable position in the Museum. In the spell, Pancrates's prophetic magic is impressive enough that Hadrian grants him "double fees." As Daniel Ogden has noted, there is an obvious syntactic similarity between Athenaeus's anecdote and the magical papyrus.⁸⁶

These two attestations of Pancrates—one by the collector of Greek culture Athenaeus and the other in the magical papyri—speak more readily to the intellectual flexibility of Egyptian authors of Aegyptiaca than to an improbable coincidence of two different Egyptian advisers of Hadrian named Pancrates. Suggesting that the two passages refer to the same person is not to deny that they are either (a) not independent of each other or (b) only marginally truthful accretions onto the same historical persona. But the broad verisimilitude of the anecdotes is more important than legislating their strict historicity. Pancrates could reasonably appear to win over Hadrian both through a traditional display of magic and through

84. That history is laid out succinctly in Kákosy (1977).

85. He is referred to as a priest and resident of Heliopolis in *BNJ* 609 F 25.

86. Ogden (2004, 107–10; 2007, 250). Respectively "Pancrates the poet, one of the inhabitants . . . to the emperor Hadrian" (Παγκράτης τις τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ποιητής . . . Ἀδριανῶι τῷ αὐτοκράτορι) and "Pachrates the Heliopolitan prophet to the emperor Hadrian" (Παχράτης, ὁ προφήτης Ἡλιοπόλεως, Ἀδριανῶ βασιλεῖ).

typically Alexandrian praise poetry.⁸⁷ As with Thrasyllus's swallows, the variation that emerges in these two post hoc discussions of Panocrates is not a problem. It is exactly the point I am trying to underline about the cross-cultural authority for those writing about "Egyptian things," whether those "things" are lotus plants or magical spells. Even in very different generic contexts, there is a sustained interest in the way that Panocrates wields his expertise to impress an emperor and secure advancement.

Panocrates is also mentioned by Lucian, a mixed Assyrian-Greek satirist. Like Julia Balbilla's paternal line, he hailed from the kingdom of Commagene, which had become Roman Syria in the first century CE. Lucian was attuned to and quick to satirize culturally mixed people who laid claim to a Greek identity. He includes himself in this group: in one of his dialogues, a character refers to a thinly veiled version of Lucian as "the Syrian" and "still a barbarian in accent and wearing a kafftan like a Syrian."⁸⁸ Lucian's preoccupation with cultural mixture spans Syria and Egypt, where he had spent some time during his career.⁸⁹ In a different dialogue, the *Lover of Lies*, Lucian paints Panocrates with the same brush he had applied to himself.

Lucian's Panocrates seems to overlap with the Pancrateses mentioned by Athenaeus and the magical papyri. As Daniel Ogden concludes, "they are, in short, best seen as different faces of the same tradition."⁹⁰ In this light, Ogden has suggested that Lucian's Panocrates is patterned on the Panocrates of the magical papyri.⁹¹ Within the *Lover of Lies*, Panocrates is a magician who mentors the narrator Eucrates. Eucrates's description of Panocrates's curriculum vitae echoes the positions and titles of other authors of Aegyptiaca. Specifically, Panocrates is called "one of the sacred scribes," a position also held by Chaeremon.⁹² To Eucrates, Panocrates's status as sacred scribe builds toward a much more substantial claim: "He is amazingly wise and knows all of Egyptian culture."⁹³ Eucrates's compliment links Panocrates to a much longer-lived kind of intellectual authority, in which authors like Seneca and Gellius underlined the polymathy of authors

87. P. Oxy. 1085, though in a fragmentary state of preservation, contains a sizable fragment of the poem.

88. *Bis Acc.* 27: βάρβαρον ἔτι τὴν φωνὴν καὶ μονονουχὶ κἀνδυν ἐνδεδουκότα εἰς τὸν Ἀσσύριον τρόπον. Text is Macleod (1972–1987).

89. On which see Swain (1996, 321n77–323n87).

90. Ogden (2007, 252). Dickie (2001, 205) also identifies as one person the Pachrates of the Paris Magical Papyrus, Lucian's Panocrates, and Athenaeus's Panocrates. Escolano-Poveda (2020, 181–82) lays out, but does not fully endorse, the links between these different Panocrates attestations.

91. Ogden (2004, 107–10) (redeveloped in 2007, 248–52), Burstein (2016, *ad T* 1), Preisendanz (1942, 2072–73).

92. For Chaeremon's position as sacred scribe, and the strategies of translation surrounding the *hierogrammateus*, see chapter 6.

93. Lucian *Philops.* 34: . . . Μεφίτης ἀνὴρ τῶν ἱερῶν γραμματέων, θαυμάσιος τὴν σοφίαν καὶ τὴν παιδείαν πᾶσαν εἰδὼς τὴν Αἰγύπτιον.

of Aegyptiaca—Balbillus and Apion, respectively. This cultural ambassadorship is encyclopedic. It is denoted in Lucian by the loaded word *paideia* to amplify a catholic intellectualism.

The magic performed by Pancrates mixes Greek representations of an exoticized, miracle-filled Egypt and traditionally Egyptian descriptions of magicians. As Eucrates narrates: “I did not recognize who he was at first, but when I saw him performing many other wondrous deeds whenever we moored the boat—especially riding on crocodiles and swimming together with beasts, and those animals crouching and wagging their tails—I knew that he was a holy man.”⁹⁴ The heavy exoticism would seem to preclude any legitimately Egyptian representations of magic. But Dedi, the famous magician from a Middle Kingdom tale contained in Papyrus Westcar, has the same ability to tame otherwise wild beasts: “He knows how to make a lion go behind him.”⁹⁵ Animal-taming is a cultural commonplace that naturalizes a mixture of Greek and Egyptian sensibilities around magic.⁹⁶ Eucrates concludes that these magical feats prove Pancrates’s bona fides as “a holy man,” a label through which “priest” shades into a generally exoticized wonder-worker.

As with Apion and Chaeremon, Pancrates’s Egyptian priestly training blends into Greek philosophical self-presentation. The two frames are complementary traditions that co-constitute the authority claimed by Chaeremon and Pancrates. In Lucian, Pancrates’s Egyptian knowledge bleeds into his concomitant expertise as a Pythagorean philosopher. Pancrates gained his magical prowess only after training with Isis for twenty-three years, all while underground. This echoes Pythagoras himself, who had also trained with Egyptian priests. Another historical character in the *Lover of Lies* makes Pancrates’s apparent Pythagoreanism even clearer. Within the dialogue, Pancrates trained not only the narrator Eucrates, but also the interlocutor Arignotus. This character Arignotus is historically well-known as a Pythagorean philosopher. By casting Pancrates as Arignotus’s teacher, Lucian conjures a plausible but nevertheless fictitious scenario in which authors of Aegyptiaca help train Pythagorean philosophers.

Arignotus may have been trained by Pancrates, but he is, like Lucian himself, cruel in his description of Pancrates’s cultural mixture: “You’re talking about my teacher Pancrates,’ said Arignotus, ‘a holy man, completely shaved, always

94. Lucian *Philops.* 34: καὶ τὰ μὲν πρῶτα ἠγνόουν ὅστις ἦν, ἐπεὶ δὲ ἑώρων αὐτὸν εἶ ποτε ὀρμίσαμεν τὸ πλοῖον ἄλλα τε πολλὰ τεράστια ἐργαζόμενον, καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐπὶ κροκοδείλων ὀχούμενον καὶ συννέοντα τοῖς θηρίοις, τὰ δὲ ὑποπτήσοντα καὶ σαίνοντα ταῖς οὐραῖς, ἔγνω ἱερὸν τινα ἀνθρώπων ὄντα.

95. P. Westcar 7, 5 (ed. Blackman and Davies 1988, tr. Simpson 18): *jwꜣf rh(.w) rdjt šm mj hr-sꜣꜣf sšdꜣ hr tꜣ*.

96. Frankfurter (1998, 227–28) juxtaposes Pancrates’s magical display and Papyrus Westcar to emphasize imperial-era lector priests’ deliberate use of the magician persona for social advancement in Rome. Escolano-Poveda (2020, 183–84) connects Pancrates’ crocodile riding to imagery on Horus cippi.

thoughtful, speaking Greek impurely, lanky, snub-nosed, with lips that jut out and pretty thin in the legs.”⁹⁷ Pancrates’s flexible and mixed identity, emblematic of the wider tradition of Aegyptiaca, is recast into a grotesque body. Some of the typical fascinations of cultural mixture that Lucian had developed in his self-satirization reappear here. Lucian described himself as “a barbarian in accent,” just as he singles out Pancrates’s accented Greek. This laser-like focus on accent amplifies core issues of creolization, which is a postcolonial theorization rooted in language contact.⁹⁸ Literally, Lucian claims that Pancrates “hellenizes impurely.” In the prestige economy of the imperial Greek world, this is a damning insult. Language purity had long been wielded as a litmus test by which to establish the legitimacy of one’s claim to Greekness. In Arignotus’s list of insults, impure speech is a bridge between a comic stereotype of the Egyptian priest—linen clothes, shaved head—and a racialized description through which Pancrates’s body precludes any legitimate Greek identity. His lips and legs and nose are a dead giveaway that Pancrates is and always will be an Egyptian.

AEGYPTIACA IN REVIEW

Lucian is such a fascinating note to end on because he juxtaposes two competing visions with which to view authors of Aegyptiaca. Pancrates is the idealized image of cultural competency and intellectualism. He is an authority on magic and Egyptian culture on the one hand, and Pythagorean philosophy and Greek culture on the other. But this creolizing intellectual expertise soon gives way to a racializing portrait of accented speech and grotesque body that suggests that any attempts at “Greekness” will always be betrayed by a body that can never not be Egyptian.

This delegitimization of Pancrates’s claim to a mixed identity brings me full circle. I opened this part of the book with a quote from Josephus, in which he trots out Apion’s birth in the Oasis and Egyptian origins to discredit his status as an Alexandrian Greek. Lucian also satirizes a creolizing identity to suggest that, try as Pancrates might, he will never “really” be Greek. Lucian’s and Josephus’s criticisms prove the historical power and prevalence of such mixed figures. These criticisms emerge from very different contexts: Arignotus’s criticisms of Pancrates’ impure Greek, like Lucian’s self-satirization of his own accent, humorously comment on the cultural cachet of pure Atticism.⁹⁹ Where Lucian is playful when he cuts Pancrates down to size, Josephus is serious. His delegitimization of Apion’s Alexandrian citizenship reflects the tension surrounding first-century CE multiculturalism under Roman power. Like Apion, the Pancrates discussed by

97. Lucian *Philops.* 34: Παγκράτην λέγεις, ἔφη ὁ Ἀρίγνωτος, ἐμὸν διδάσκαλον, ἄνδρα ἱερόν, ἐξυρημένον ἀεὶ, νοήμονα, οὐ καθαρῶς ἐλληνίζοντα, ἐπιμήκη, σιμόν, προχειλῆ, ὑπόλεπτον τὰ σκέλη.

98. As emphasized by Baker and Mühlhäusler (2007).

99. On Atticism, see canonically Schmid (1887–1897), and the social framing of language purity in Schmitz (1997, 67–96).

Athenaeus was an Alexandrian Greek. Both Pancrates and Apion are ambassadors of Alexandrianism whose ability to represent Greek culture piques the ire of other culturally mixed people—Josephus and Lucian. Whether seriously or playfully, the latter two cannot help but reemphasize the fact that, when push comes to shove, both Apion and Pancrates are really just Egyptians.

Chaeremon, the Balbilli, and Pancrates brought together increasingly wide-ranging intellectual traditions under one authorial identity. *Aegyptiaca* was a tradition and an ongoing creolizing process, not a Manethonian flash in the pan. If one thing has become clear, it is that there was no one set pattern through which these figures created their intellectual authority or coordinated Egyptian and Greek traditions. This variegated and networked image of cultural combination makes rigid distinctions between an insider's emic presentation of Egypt and an external Greek mode of representation untenable. Astrology—practiced by Chaeremon, Thrasyllus, and Tiberius Claudius Balbillus—is so fruitful because it offers a paradigmatic example of a creolizing intellectual tradition in which a combined Greco-Egyptian perspective is “emic.” This mixture extends well beyond astrology. Julia Balbilla addressed Memnon as an archetype of the blended Egyptian and Greek persona through which she defined her own identity as poet and epigrammatist. Memnon's mythic antiquity helps Julia Balbilla imagine a world where creolizing processes had never not been underway.

Alexandria was the site where this blending took place. Chaeremon, the Balbilli, and Pancrates occupied positions in temples, the Library of Alexandria, and the Museum. These different posts bridge the religious and literary, Greek and Egyptian, to create a new intellectualism that should not be masked by Alexandria's long-standing association with Greek literary culture and position near, rather than in, Egypt. The heterogeneous, cross-cultural literary production of these authors was the Alexandrian culture that Rome encountered. Authors of *Aegyptiaca* like Chaeremon, Tiberius Claudius Balbillus, and Apion were, quite literally, ambassadors of Alexandria for a Roman audience.

Aegyptiaca as a genre was consistently read through the biographical proximity of author with emperor. Balbillus used astrological know-how to help Nero kill off his senatorial competition and avoid a fated death. Pancrates impressed Hadrian either through an epyllion or through a display of magic. Julia Balbilla played the intermediary between Memnon and the emperor and his wife. These encounters between Egyptian and emperor reflect the mutual influence and attraction through which the intellectual traditions embedded in *Aegyptiaca* were increasingly politicized, shaped into a form that could best serve the emperor and justify his position of authority.

The historical and social context that makes these authors of *Aegyptiaca* so important has taken shape. But as yet I have only hinted—via swallows and crocodile fights—at the substance of these texts. One can appreciate *that* these Egyptians blended together Greek and Egyptian cultural perspectives: that Chaeremon was

both a source for privileged priestly knowledge and a well-known Stoic philosopher; that Apion bridged Greek and Egyptian perspectives on animals. But it is also necessary to show *how* they did so. This will help position *Aegyptiaca* as a bridge between long-standing traditional Egyptian cultural forms discussed by Egyptologists and Roman authors like Virgil and Juvenal discussed by Classicists. In the next section, I trace how one widely recognized cultural commonplace—Egypt’s sacred animals—traveled across that bridge.