

***Aegyptiaka* in Creolization: Ethnicity and Authorial Identity in Apion**

Edward Kelting (ekelting@stanford.edu)

Stanford University

CAMWS Annual Meeting 2018, Albuquerque, NM

5th Session, Section H: Ancient Ethnographies

I. Apion as Egyptian

1. Josephus

καὶ τί γε δεῖ θαυμάζειν, εἰ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων ψεύδεται προγόνων, λέγων αὐτοὺς εἶναι τὸ γένος Αἰγυπτίους; αὐτὸς γὰρ περὶ αὐτοῦ τὸναντίον ἐψεύδετο, καὶ γεγενημένος ἐν Ὁάσει τῆς Αἰγύπτου, πάντων Αἰγυπτίων πρῶτος ὢν, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις, τὴν μὲν ἀληθῆ πατρίδα καὶ τὸ γένος ἐξωμόσατο, Ἀλεξανδρεὺς δὲ εἶναι καταψευδόμενος ὁμολογεῖ τὴν μοχθηρίαν τοῦ γένους... πρὸς ἡμᾶς δὲ δυοῖν θάτερον Αἰγύπτιοι πεπόνθασιν· ἢ γὰρ ὡς ἐπισημνυόμενοι προσποιούνται τὴν συγγένειαν ἢ κοινωνοὺς ἡμᾶς ἐπισπῶνται τῆς αὐτῶν κακοδοξίας. ὁ δὲ γενναῖος Ἀπίων δοκεῖ μὲν τὴν βλασφημίαν τὴν καθ' ἡμῶν ὥσπερ τινὰ μισθὸν ἐβελῆσαι παρασχεῖν Ἀλεξανδρεῦσι τῆς δοθείσης αὐτῶι πολιτείας, καὶ τὴν ἀπέχθειαν αὐτῶν ἐπιστάμενος τὴν πρὸς τοὺς συνοικοῦντας αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας Ἰουδαίους προτέθειτο μὲν ἐκείνοις λοιδορεῖσθαι, συμπεριλαμβάνειν δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἅπαντας, ἐν ἀμφοτέροις ἀναισχύντως ψευδόμενος. (Joseph. *Ap.* 2.28-9, 31-2 = BN⁷616 T 4a).

And why should we be amazed if Apion lies about our ancestors, claiming that they were Egyptian in birth? He lied about himself in the opposite way! Born in the Oasis in Egypt, and, so to speak, in the first rank of all Egyptians, he forswore his true homeland and people and falsely claimed to be from Alexandria, despising his own people . . . With respect to us, Egyptians do one of two things: either they boast to be our kin, or else they drag us down by association with their own ill-repute. But the noble Apion seems to want to present his slander of us (Jews) to the Alexandrians as a kind of payment for the citizenship they gave him. Knowing their hatred of the Jews who live among them in Alexandria, he proceeds to insult them, and to include all the others, lying shamelessly. (tr. Keyser, adapted)¹

2. Pliny (the elder)

...scarabaeum, qui pilas uoluit. 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. (Plin. *HN.* 30.99 = F 19).

. . . scarab-beetle that rolls pellets (of dung). Because of this (insect), most of Egypt worships scarab-beetles among the divinities, in the careful interpretation of Apion, by which he gathers that there's a similarity between the labors of the sun and this animal, to excuse the rites of his own people. (adapted)

3. Clement of Alexandria

Ἀπίων τοίνυν ὁ γραμματικός, ὁ Πλειστονίκης ἐπικληθείς, ἐν τῇ τετάρτῃ τῶν Αἰγυπτιακῶν ἱστοριῶν, καίτοι φιλαπεχθιμόνως πρὸς Ἑβραίους διακεείμενος, ἅτε Αἰγύπτιος τὸ γένος, ὡς καὶ κατὰ Ἰουδαίων συντάξασθαι βιβλίον. (Clement of Alexandria *Misc.* 1.103.3 = T 11a)

¹ Translations are from Keyser 2015. I have noted where I have modified his translation.

Apion the grammarian, nicknamed ‘Victorious’, in the fourth book of his Egyptian Histories—indeed, inimical to the Hebrews, since he was Egyptian by birth, so that he composed a book against the Jews. (adapted)

II. Apion as Greek

1. Julius Africanus

- a) οἱ τε ἐξ Ἑλλήνων, Πολέμων φημὶ καὶ Ἀπίων, Ποσειδώνιος καὶ Ἡρόδοτος (*Chron.* 70 = T 3b)

And those (writers) from among the Greeks, Polemon, I mean, and Apion, Poseidonios, and Herodotus

- b) Ἀπίων δὲ ὁ Ποσειδωνίου (*Praep. Eveng.* 10.10.16 = T 3a)

2. Seneca (the younger)

Apion grammaticus, qui sub C. Caesare tota circumlatus est Graecia et in nomen Homeri ab omnibus civitatibus adoptatus, aiebat... (*Ep.* 88.40 = T 5a)

Apion the grammarian, who in the reign of Gaius Caesar (Caligula) traveled throughout Greece, and was adopted in the name of Homer by all the towns, used to say...

For Apion as *grammaticus*, cf.: *Apion quidem grammaticus* (Plin. *HN praef.* 25 = T 13). Apion is also called a *grammaticus* at T 16c and FF 3, 15, 28.

3. Aulus Gellius

- a) Ἀπίων, Graecus homo, qui Πλειστονείκης appellatus est, facili atque alacri facundia fuit. (*Gell. NA* 7.8.1 = T 2c)

Apion, a Greek man, who was named ‘Quarrelsome,’ had a ready, swift way of speech.

- b) *Apion, qui Plistonices appellatus est, litteris homo multis praeditus rerumque Graecarum plurima atque uaria scientia fuit. eius libri non incelebres feruntur, quibus omnium ferme quae mirifica in Aegypto uisuntur audiunturque historia comprehenditur. sed in his quae uel audisse uel legisse sese dicit, fortassean uitio studioque ostentationis sit loquacior – est enim sane quam in praedicandis doctrinis sui uenditator –, hoc autem quod in libro Aegyptiacorum quinto scripsit, neque audisse neque legisse, sed ipsum sese in urbe Roma uidisse oculis suis confirmat...* (*Gell. NA* 5.14.1-4 = T 10a)

Apion, nicknamed ‘Quarrelsome,’ was a man well-versed in literature and in the many varied matters of Greek science. His books were famous, and in them is included almost all the marvels that are seen and heard in Egypt. But in his accounts which he says he heard or read himself he might be too loquacious due to a wicked zeal for display—he is a great seller of himself. But this incident, which he wrote in book five of his *Egyptian Matters*, he says he neither heard nor read, but saw it in Rome himself with his own eyes...

4. Apion the Homerist

- a) *Apion ... aiebat Homerum utraque materia consummata, et Odyssea et Iliade, principium adiecisse operi suo, quo bellum Troianum complexus est. huius rei argumentum adferebat, quod duas litteras in primo uersu posuisset ex industria librorum suorum numerum continentes.* (*Sen. Ep.* 88.40 = F 34)

Apion used to say that when Homer had completed both plots, the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, he added a beginning to his work in which he dealt with the Trojan War. He offered as evidence of this that Homer deliberately placed two letters in the first line indicating the number of his own books.

- b) “ἦος ἐν Ὀρτυγίῃ χρυσόθρονος Ἄρτεμις ἄγνή (Od. 5.123)” Ἀπίων τὸ “ἄγνή” περισπᾶι κατὰ δοτικὴν, ἀκούων ἐν Ὀρτυγίῃ ἄγνῃ. (*Schol. HPQ*, 5, 123 = F 41)

‘until in Ortygia golden-throned holy Artemis’ (Od. 5.123): Apion spells ἄγνή with a circumflex, in the dative, understanding ‘in holy Ortygia’.

- c) γελοίως ὁ Ἀπίων τοὺς “ἵπποκορυστάς” ἀπέδωκε τοὺς κόρυθας ἔχοντας ἵππείαις θριξὶ κεκοσμημένας. εἰ δὲ παρὰ τὴν κόρυν συνέκειτο, κἂν ἵπποκόρυθες ἐλέγοντο. (*Porph. Hom. Quaest.* p. 20.9 ed. Schrader = F 42)

Apion foolishly derived ἵπποκορυστάς (‘horse-helmed’) from helms decorated with horse manes. But if they were set on a helm, they would be called ἵπποκόρυθες.

Select Bibliography

- Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York.
- Damon, C. (2008). ‘The mind of an ass and the impudence of a dog: a scholar gone bad’, in I. Sluiter and R. Rosen (eds.), *KAKOS, Badness and Anti-Value in Classical Antiquity* (Mnemosyne, bibliotheca classica Batava. Supplementum 307). Leiden, 335–64.
- (2011). ‘Pliny on Apion’, in R. Gibson and R. Morello (eds.), *Pliny the Elder: Themes and Contexts*. Leiden, 131–46.
- Dench, E. (2013). ‘The scope of ancient ethnography’, in E. Almagor and J. Skinner (eds.), *Ancient Ethnography: New Approaches*. London, 257–67.
- Dillery, J. (2003). ‘Putting him back together again: Apion historian, Apion grammaticos’, *CP* 98.4: 383–90.
- (2015). *Clio’s Other Sons: Berossus and Manetho, with an Afterword on Demetrius*. Ann Arbor.
- Goodman, M. (1999). ‘Josephus’ treatise against Apion’, in M.J. Edwards, M. Goodman, S.R.F. Price, and C. Rowland (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians*. Oxford, 45–58.
- Hannerz, U. (1987). ‘The world in creolisation’, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 57.4: 546–59.
- Jones, K.R. (2005). ‘The figure of Apion in Josephus’ *Contra Apionem*’, *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 36.3: 278–315.
- Keyser, P.T. (2015). ‘Apion of Alexandria (616)’, Worthington, I. (ed.) *Brill’s New Jacoby*.
- Khan, A. (2007). ‘Creolization moments’, in C. Stewart (ed.), *Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory*. Walnut Creek, CA, 237–53.
- Levy, I. (1900). ‘Apion État-il Alexandrin?’, *REJ* 41: 188–95.
- Ludwich, A. (1918). ‘Über die Homerischen Glossen Apions’, *Philologus* 75.1–4: 95–127.
- Moyer, I.S. (2011). *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism*. Cambridge.
- Neitzel, S. (1977). ‘Apions Γλωσσαι Ὀμηρικαί’, in K. Linke, W. Haas, and S. Neitzel (eds.), *Die Fragmente des Grammatikers Dionysios Thrax. Die Fragmente der Grammatiker Tyrannion und Diokles. Apions Glossai Homerikai*. (Sammlung griechischer und lateinischer Grammatiker). Berlin, 185–328.
- Stewart, C. (ed.) (2007). *Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory*. Walnut Creek, CA.
- van der Horst, P.W. (2002). ‘Who was Apion’, in *Japheth in the Tents of Shem: Studies on Jewish Hellenism in Antiquity*. Leuven, 207–21.