

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

The birth of the *Aegyptiaka* historiographic tradition, inaugurated with Manetho's now-fragmentary work on Egypt, gave birth to a schematic division between emic and etic presentations of Egypt. Herodotus and the Greek, etic tradition presented Egypt as an exoticized Other through which to define the Greek Self; Manetho and other Egyptians contraposed *Aegyptiaka*, which provided an emic, authoritative account of Egypt and its customs (Moyer; Dillery). But as time progressed, Egyptian authors writing in the *Aegyptiaka* tradition began to combine perspectives traditionally slotted into either the Herodotean, etic camp or the authoritative, emic camp. Egyptian authors flourishing under the early Principate wrote on fantastic animals, glossed Homeric lexica, and philosophized Egyptian priests even as they maintained an authoritative knowledge of Egyptian chronology, hieroglyphic, and religion.

This paper offers a reevaluation of two of these under-discussed practitioners of early-Imperial *Aegyptiaka*: Apion, an Egyptian given Alexandrian citizenship who wrote on both Egypt and Homer, and Chaeremon, an Egyptian who reputedly tutored Nero, gained fame as a Stoic, and wrote about Egyptian priests and hieroglyphic. Scholars have tried to reconcile the identities deployed by Apion (Damon 2008, 2011; Dillery 2003; van der Horst 2002) and Chaeremon (van der Horst 1984) into one tidy whole, viewing them alternatively as Greeks or as Egyptians masquerading as Greeks. The prevailing narrative has been disjunctive, viewing the identities of *Aegyptiaka* authors as a schematic either/or that tries to maintain an emic/etic distinction which had long since been blurred.

I will instead suggest that ambiguity should be embraced, rather than swept under the rug. To appreciate the interplay of mixed ethnicity and authorial identity, I argue that creolization provides the most fruitful lens through which to view the complicated blending of Greek and

Egyptian identities visible in Apion and Chaeremon. Creolization, as articulated by the postcolonial anthropologist Ulf Hannerz and re-interrogated in the work of Charles Stewart, is a good fit for the intellectual production of elite, mixed-identity Egyptians like Apion and Chaeremon: it highlights the blending of cultural inputs that occurs in colonial contexts, the socioeconomic hierarchization of cultures along an urban-rural axis, the role of formal education in authorizing and incentivizing one culture's input.

A survey of Apion and Chaeremon's testimonia shows that these figures deployed Greek and Egyptian trappings of authority to cement their own advantageous positions. Later readers endowed Apion and Chaeremon with mixed markers of authority—Greek *Paidea*, Alexandrian citizenship, posts in the *Museion*, Egyptian scribal positions—that illustrate the blended Egyptian environment in which they thrived.

I then show how blended identities visible in the testimonia enrich our reading of their actual fragments, where Greek and Egyptian elements crosspollinate. I look at one test case to illustrate this creolized picture of later *Aegyptiaka*: the fable of Androcles and the lion, first attested in Apion. Scholars have traditionally either split Chaeremon and Apion's fragments into their Greek and Egyptian parts or written off the authenticity of their Egyptian knowledge for its *interpretationes graecae* (van der Horst 1984). Most have read the fable as an inheritance from the Aesopic tradition. But the cultural debt is not so simple. As I argue, Apion's story represents a synthesis of Greek *and* Egyptian traditions of animal fable. Apion, steeped in a mixture of Greek and Egyptian intellectual culture, mixes Greek and Egyptian elements to naturalize his hybrid authority and identity.

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