

Subject Peoples and Civilizational Priority: Competition among Babylonians, Egyptians, and Judeans in the Hellenistic Era*

Philip A. Harland
York University; pharland@yorku.ca

■ Abstract

This article proceeds on the principle that we need to decenter dominant ethnic groups—primarily Greeks and Greco-Macedonians in the early Hellenistic era—in order to understand other marginalized viewpoints and experiences, including but not limited to those of Judeans (Jews). An analysis of the Babylonian author Bel-re’ushu helps to provide a new angle on Judean (e.g., Artapanus) and Egyptian (e.g., Manetho) participation within ethnic discourses that include claims to civilizational priority. I would suggest that the rhetoric of ethnic superiority in writings by subject peoples can be viewed as a symptom of ethnic interactions and not merely as a literary response to elite Greek claims regarding the inferiority of supposedly “barbarian” peoples. So it is not always the currently hegemonic Greeks that are the principal interlocutors in these ethnic discourses.

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■ Keywords

ethnicity in the ancient world, colonialism, ethnic rivalries, subject peoples, Babylonians, Egyptians, Judeans

Concerning the antiquity of their kinship group, not only do Greeks make claims but many barbarians as well, with everyone saying that they are the original people and the first of all humanity to discover the things which are useful in life. (Diodorus of Sicily, *Library of History* 1.9.3)¹

■ Introduction

Diodorus's comment in the mid-first century BCE brings us promptly into the field of ethnic relations in the ancient context and illustrates a recurring debate that took place: whose civilization is the most ancient, and what does this indicate about the relative superiority or inferiority of specific peoples? Diodorus's words also show that claims to cultural priority were made not just by dominant Greeks or Romans but also by subject peoples ("barbarians" from the Hellenocentric view). Despite seeing things through Greek eyes, Diodorus offers us a picture of ethnic relations on the ground, a picture that is confirmed by materials produced by conquered peoples themselves in earlier centuries as well. This article turns to similar materials from the first two centuries following Alexander's conquests (ca. 331–100 BCE) in order to suggest that subject peoples' claims to civilizational priority were not simply abstract literary discourses separate from local social contexts. Rather, these materials in literary form should be understood as instantiations of the sorts of ethnic discourses and competitive claims that took place in everyday social encounters in various places. In a separate case study focused on epigraphic and papyrological evidence for the Arsinoite district (*nome*) of Egypt, I fill in more fully the ways in which oral traditions and legends (sometimes echoed in literary sources) played a role in local ethnic relations and claims of superiority.² But there are some cases here in this piece where these connections between literature and oral culture, between elite representations and social life, are evident as well.

¹ Friedrich Vogel, *Diodori Bibliotheca Historica* (vol. 1; Leipzig: Teubner, 1888). Cf. Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.150–152.

² Philip A. Harland, "'Syrians Call You Astarte . . . Lycian Peoples Call You Leto': Ethnic Relations and Circulating Legends in the Villages of Egypt," *JNES* 80 (2021) 357–76.

Despite their elite status and adoption of the Greek language to express their views,³ the Babylonian Bel-re'ushu (Berossus),⁴ the Egyptian Manetho,⁵ and the Judean (Jew) Artapanus may be understood to reflect how subject peoples under Hellenistic hegemony could actively express who—and how important—they thought they were. Processes of ethnic identification could take place not only in relation to a hegemonic group, like the Greco-Macedonians but also in competition with other ethnic groups. In fact, when approached in a way that carefully decenters Hellenistic power-holders, literary evidence and other materials pertaining to the colonized can provide glimpses into experiences of subject peoples and into processes of ethnic identification and differentiation.⁶

When scholars consider literature produced by nondominant peoples, there is often a (conscious or unconscious) tendency to put Greeks at the center, explaining marginalized perspectives and literary or cultural products in Hellenistic terms.⁷ In considering Berossus and Artapanus, for instance, John J. Collins claims that the “writings of the Greeks about the East prompted some of the native peoples to explain their own culture to the Greek world. Their attempts were inevitably influenced by Greek prototypes, but they were diverse in kind.”⁸ Although aware of the problematic effects of cultural imperialism on classical scholarship in other respects,⁹ Amélie Kuhrt claims that the force of Berossus’s approach is to consolidate Seleucid rule and to “reshape Babylonian records in accordance with the principles of Hellenistic historiography.”¹⁰ Geert de Breucker is part of a

³ On finding a balance in the approach to class and ethnicity, see Stuart Hall, *Essential Essays* (ed. David Morley; 2 vols.; Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019) 1:172–221; 2:48–50.

⁴ His Akkadian name was likely either “the Lord (Bel) is their shepherd” (Bel-re’ushunu), as in R. J. van der Spek, “Berossus as a Babylonian Chronicler and Greek Historian,” in *Studies in Ancient Near Eastern World View and Society* (ed. R. J. van der Spek; Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2008) 277, or “the Lord is his shepherd” (Bel-re’ushu), as in Kathryn Stevens, *Between Greece and Babylonia: Hellenistic Intellectual History in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge Classical Studies; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) 117–19.

⁵ The precise meaning of this figure’s Egyptian name is highly debated, but some suggestions for the name’s meaning are “Truth of Thoth,” “I have seen Thoth,” and “Beloved of the great god.” See Ian Moyer, *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 85 n. 5. The use of the Greek name here therefore remains necessary, even though the indigenous name would be preferable.

⁶ See Greg Woolf, *Tales of the Barbarians: Ethnography and Empire in the Roman West* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2010) 2–3, 17–19, though he is more skeptical than I am about pursuing the perspectives of subject peoples.

⁷ See Stevens, *Between Greece and Rome*, 1–4.

⁸ John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000 [1983]) 30.

⁹ *Hellenism in the East: The Interaction of Greek and Non-Greek Civilizations from Syria to Central Asia After Alexander* (ed. Amélie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White; London: Duckworth, 1987) ix. Cf. Susan Sherwin-White and Amélie Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis: A New Approach to the Seleucid Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 141–42.

¹⁰ Amélie Kuhrt, “Berossus’ *Babyloniaka* and Seleucid Rule in Babylonia,” in *Hellenism in the East* (ed. Kuhrt and Sherwin-White), 48. Cf. Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium: The Historical*

resurgence in the study of Babylonian culture (of this era) in recent decades, and yet he similarly argues that, overall, Berossus was typically Hellenistic and that he “tailored his work to the Greek way of thinking.”¹¹ For John Dillery, Berossus and Manetho are significant primarily as “Clio’s other sons,” in other words, as inspired by the muse of Greek “historiography.”¹² Also problematic in my view are recent studies that take at their word Tatian and Eusebius (writing hundreds of years later and with conflicting stories), who claim Berossus wrote his work for some Seleucid king, with these scholars using this Babylonian work primarily as a means to access literary and ideological productions of the Seleucid court.¹³

While making contributions in other areas, this scholarly framing of sources produced by conquered peoples in terms of Hellenistic ideologies, viewpoints, and genres of literature (especially “historiography”), with its implicit—if not explicit—centering of Greek culture, leads our attention away from important issues in social and cultural history and in some cases erases non-dominant perspectives. Recent studies by Ian Moyer on the limits of Hellenism in Egypt and by Kathryn Stevens on cross-cultural intellectual history in Babylonia, although not focused on our topic of ethnic relations, provide hope for alternative approaches in some respects.¹⁴ The more traditional Hellenocentric procedure, on the other hand,

Evolution of the Hellenistic Age (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) 326, who speaks of these authors as imperial “bootlickers.” For critique, see Moyer, *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism*, 42–83; John Dillery, *Clio’s Other Sons: Berossus and Manetho* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015) xiv–xix. See Stevens, *Between Greece and Babylonia*, 114–17.

¹¹ Geert de Breucker, “Berossus and the Construction of a Near Eastern Cultural History in Response to the Greeks,” in *Constructions of Greek Past: Identity and Historical Consciousness from Antiquity to the Present* (ed. H. Hokwerda; Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2003) 31–32. Cf. Geert de Breucker, “Berossus between Tradition and Innovation,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture* (ed. Karen Radner and Eleanor Robson; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 237–57. De Breucker’s views are rightly critiqued by Johannes Haubold, *Greece and Mesopotamia: Dialogues in Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 144–45, and by Christopher Tuplin, “Berossus and Greek Historiography,” in *The World of Berossus* (ed. Johannes Haubold et al.; *Classica et Orientalia* 5; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013) 177–98.

¹² Dillery, *Clio’s Other Sons*. Cf. Gregory Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephus, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography* (NovTSup 64; Leiden: Brill, 1992) 2–19. Both Benjamin Isaac’s and Erich Gruen’s insightful studies on ethnic interactions nonetheless focus most attention on Greek or Roman perspectives on or stereotypes about others: Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Erich S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

¹³ Tatian, *Or. Graec.* 36 (= *NBJ* 609 T2); Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 10.11.8. These two very late claims (400–600 years after) differ, with Tatian saying that Berossus wrote for “Antiochos, the third successor after him [Alexander (?)]” and Eusebius saying that Berossus wrote for “the third [king] after Seleukos.” Paul Kosmin, “Seleucid Ethnography and Indigenous Kingship,” in *The World of Berossus* (ed. Haubold et al.), 199–212; Marijn S. Visscher, *Beyond Alexandria: Literature and Empire in the Seleucid World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020) 7, 77–118. Far more cautious is Stevens, *Between Greece and Babylonia*, 115–17. Possible connections between Manetho and the Ptolemaic court are less fragile but still not certain. See especially Plutarch, *Mor.* 362a = *NBJ* 609 T3. Cf. Ian Moyer, “Berossus and Manetho,” in *The World of Berossus* (ed. Haubold et al.), 213–15.

¹⁴ Moyer, *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism*, 42–83. My attention to local social histories makes

often does not pay enough attention to the perspectives of subject peoples of the Near East as reflected in available evidence and misses important corollaries for ethnic relations and colonial experiences in the process. There is a tendency to presume that educated Greeks are the originators of any discourses in which they participate, simply because they are culturally dominant or because some among the colonized adopt the new lingua franca (Greek) to express themselves. Quite often there is a rush to explain literature produced by conquered peoples primarily as a response to *writings* by Greek authors, rather than as potential reflections of social interactions and ethnic relations: elite Greeks write and elite subject peoples respond in writing in a way that mirrors or, less so, challenges Greek positions.¹⁵ There is something to be gained from firmly rooting these authors in their local or regional social and cultural worlds rather than treating them as generic responses to, or reflections of, Hellenistic culture. Furthermore, the emphasis on “literature” or “intellectual culture” in scholarship means there is less attention to connections between ideologies expressed by the literary elites, on the one hand, and social interactions among peoples of various social strata, on the other.¹⁶

This article proceeds on the principle that we need to decenter dominant ethnic groups in order to understand alternative viewpoints and experiences among Babylonians, Egyptians, Judeans, and others. I suggest that the rhetoric of ethnic superiority and civilizational priority in writings by subject peoples can often be viewed as a *symptom* of ethnic interactions and not merely as a literary response to elite Greek assertions regarding the inferiority of supposedly “barbarian” peoples. Nor are subject peoples’ claims merely an adoption of Greek contrapuntal notions of the “wise barbarian,” even if these discourses of foreign wisdom certainly overlap and may sometimes reflect active conversations between Greeks and conquered peoples.¹⁷ So it is not always the currently hegemonic Greeks or Greco-Macedonians (or, later, the Romans) that are the principal interlocutors in—or originators of—the ethnic discourses I explore here.

me hesitant about Stevens’s focus on a cosmopolitan “Hellenistic intellectual culture” (Stevens, *Between Greece and Babylon*, 7).

¹⁵ After writing these opening paragraphs and then rereading Edward W. Said’s *Orientalism* ([New York: Pantheon Books, 1978) 108–9), I encountered his similar observation: “So impressive have the descriptive and textual successes of Orientalism been that entire periods of the Orient’s cultural, political, and social history are considered *mere responses to the West*. The West is the actor, the Orient a passive reactor. The West is the spectator, the judge and jury, of every facet of Oriental behavior” (emphasis mine).

¹⁶ On recent calls for attention to oral culture, see Wouter F. M. Henkelman, “The Birth of Gilgameš (Ael. NA XII.21): A Case-Study in Literary Receptivity,” in *Altertum und Mittelmeerraum. Die antike Welt diesseits und jenseits der Levante. Festschrift für Peter W. Haider zum 60. Geburtstag* (ed. R. Rollinger and B. Truschneegg; OeO 12; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006) 810; Jacqueline E. Jay, *Orality and Literacy in the Demotic Tales* (Leiden: Brill, 2016) 19–126; Lawrence Kim, “Orality, Folktales and the Cross-Cultural Transmission of Narrative,” in *The Romance between Greece and the East* (ed. Tim Whitmarsh and Stuart Thomson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 300–321.

¹⁷ On Greek notions of foreign wisdom, see Philip A. Harland, “Revisiting Wise ‘Barbarians’ in the Hellenistic Era,” *Classical World* 117 (2024), forthcoming.

As I argue, Bel-re'ushu, Manetho, and Artapanus illustrate well how members of nondominant ethnic groups could engage not only with current power-holders (or local colonists associated with power-holders) but also with other subjugated or minoritized peoples in the societies where they lived. The archaeological, epigraphic, and papyrological evidence for a significant degree of ethnic diversity where our authors lived their lives draws attention to local possibilities regarding encounters between different peoples, even though these cuneiform tablets, inscriptions, papyri, and ostraca rarely offer any details about cross-cultural conversations. In light of this, I propose that the sorts of ethnic discourses and competitively expressed ancestral traditions we find in writings by figures like Bel-re'ushu, Manetho, and Artapanus may carefully be considered as instantiations or reflections of those that would be deployed by participants in actual social encounters in ethnically mixed settlements in places like Babylonia and Egypt.

■ Ethnic Hierarchies and Discourses

Social scientific studies of ethnic identification emphasize an interplay between internal self-understanding by members of an ethnic group and external categorizations or stereotypes held by other peoples.¹⁸ One of the products of these processes is what Louk Hagendoorn and other social psychologists call “ethnic hierarchies,” with different groups being ranked (often in similar ways) by participants from “superior” to “inferior” or “civilized” to “uncivilized.”¹⁹

Research in this area suggests there are two common responses by minorities or subordinated peoples, depending on the situation.²⁰ In one response, nondominant groups may struggle with one another to establish a more favorable position on the lower rungs of a current hegemonic ladder. For our period, Greeks or Greco-Macedonians were frequently positioned at the top and all other peoples below, as “barbarians.” But Greek authors might offer more specific rankings

¹⁸ See, especially, Richard Jenkins, “Rethinking Ethnicity: Identity, Categorization and Power,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17 (1994) 197–223. Cf. Henri Tajfel, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances* (ed. Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg; New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990). For my working definitions of ethnicity and related concepts, see Philip A. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians: Associations, Judeans, and Cultural Minorities* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009) 5–14.

¹⁹ E.g., Louk Hagendoorn, “Ethnic Categorization and Outgroup Exclusion: Cultural Values and Social Stereotypes in the Construction of Ethnic Hierarchies,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 16 (1993) 26–51; idem, “Intergroup Biases in Multiple Group Systems: The Perception of Ethnic Hierarchies,” *European Review of Social Psychology* 6 (1995) 199–228; idem et al., “Inter-Ethnic Preferences and Ethnic Hierarchies in the Former Soviet Union,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 22 (1998) 483–503. Cf. Alexandra Snellman and Bo Ekehammar, “Ethnic Hierarchies, Ethnic Prejudice, and Social Dominance Orientation,” *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 15 (2005) 83–94; Alexandra Snellman, *Social Hierarchies, Prejudice, and Discrimination* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2007).

²⁰ See the discussion of Philo, Paul, and Josephus in Philip A. Harland, “Climbing the Ethnic Ladder: Ethnic Hierarchies and Judean Responses,” *JBL* 138 (2019) 665–86.

that distinguished among various “barbarian” peoples.²¹ Those groups placed in a low position by a particular person or group might seek to rise on lower parts of the ladder by attempting to climb up, but they might also put another denigrated group down. In a second style of reaction, subordinated groups reject prevalent categorizations and assume an entirely different ladder in which their own ethnic group takes top rung, with all other peoples below, including apparent power-holders. These two main responses are generally not mutually exclusive, as each could play some role, depending on social or rhetorical situations. It is this second strategy that is more prevalent with regard to the sorts of claims to civilizational priority that I investigate here.

With either type of response, an important factor to consider are circulating ideologies that served to mitigate legitimizing ideologies and categorizations of dominant ethnic groups. Beyond studies of ethnic hierarchies specifically, such attenuating ideologies are also a concern of “social dominance theory” as developed by Jim Sidanius and others, which informs the discussion here.²² In this article, I approach such attenuating ideologies by investigating just one theme that consistently emerges within ethnic discourses in the Hellenistic era: namely, concepts and narratives (whether written or oral) centered on the notion that members of a nondominant ethnic group were, in fact, founders of human civilization or at least key contributors to theoretical and practical advancements in human culture. This evidence provides a new angle on more than just subject peoples’ responses to categorizations by then-dominant ethnic groups. This material may point to common strategies employed in interactions between various peoples in different places, as participants engaged or adjusted existing hierarchies or constructed alternative ones.

■ Bel-re’ushu on Babylonians

Babylonian Matters (*Babyloniaka* = *BNJ* 680) by Bel-re’ushu, which was written in Greek around 300 BCE but only partially survives in citations by others, illustrates well how subordinated peoples might assert or seek to establish a favorable position for their own group—in this case Babylonians—in current ethnic hierarchies.²³

²¹ Philip A. Harland, “‘The Most Ignorant Peoples of All’: Ancient Ethnic Hierarchies and Pontic Peoples,” in *Ethnic Constructs, Royal Dynasties and Historical Geography around the Black Sea Littoral* (ed. Altay Coşkun; *Geographica Historica* 43; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2021) 75–98.

²² Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto, *Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Felicia Pratto, Jim Sidanius, and Shana Levin, “Social Dominance Theory and the Dynamics of Intergroup Relations: Taking Stock and Looking Forward,” *European Review of Social Psychology* 17 (2006) 271–320.

²³ Relevant fragments are found in summary form in Georgios Syncellus’s *Chronography* (ca. 800 CE), where he draws on Alexander Polyhistor of Miletos’s work from the middle of the first century BCE, and in Eusebius’s *Chronicon* (in Armenian). On Bel-re’ushu, see, most recently, Stevens, *Between Greece and Babylonia*, 94–143, and the edited volume *The World of Berossus* (ed. Haubold et al.), with the bibliography by Birgit Guffler on pp. 309–23. For translations, see Geert de Breucker, “Berossus (680),” in *Brill’s New Jacoby Online* (ed. Ian Worthington; Leiden:

Likely a priest of Marduk, born in the time of Alexander of Macedon, Bel-re'ushu is a culturally hybrid figure, though the precise intended audience of the work—whether Greeks or bilingual Babylonians or, as I think more likely, both—is difficult to pin down.²⁴

Regarding Bel-re'ushu's social context in Babylonia, the presence of foreign settlers (whether forced or otherwise) from Egypt, Judea, Ashkelon, Byblos, Tyre, Armenia, Caria, Elam, Persia, and elsewhere in the centuries (sixth–fourth) leading up to our period suggests the continuing normalcy of interactions between ethnic groups and between temple personnel and foreigners like merchants.²⁵ Settled ethnic minorities were active in a variety of occupations and at various levels of society,²⁶ and they were by no means isolated from one another: sixth-century cuneiform tablets found at Sippar, for instance, show that there were regular economic interchanges between Judeans, Egyptians, and personnel of the Ebabbar temple of Shamash, and even intermarriage.²⁷ Persian-era contracts in the Murashu archive

Brill, 2010) = *BNJ* 680; Stanley Mayer Burstein, *The "Babyloniaca" of Berossus* (Sources from the Ancient Near East 5; Malibu, CA: Undena, 1978); Gerald P Verbrugge and John M Wickersham, *Berossus and Manetho Introduced and Translated: Native Traditions in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); and, as used here with modifications, *The Chronography of George Syncellus: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation* (trans. William Adler and Paul Tuffin; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

²⁴ On purpose and audience, see the options outlined by Kuhrt, "Berossus' *Babyloniaca*," 53–56, and Dillery, *Clio's Other Sons*, xix–xxiii. On the suggestion that Bel-re'ushu wrote in Aramaic, see Mark J. Geller, "Berossus on Kos from the View of Common Sense Geography," in *Features of Common Sense Geography: Implicit Knowledge Structures in Ancient Geographical Texts* (ed. Klaus Geus and Martin Thiering; Münster: LIT, 2014) 101–9.

²⁵ D. J. Wiseman, "Some Egyptians in Babylonia," *Iraq* 28 (1966) 154–58; I. Eph'al, "The Western Minorities in Babylonia in the 6th–5th Centuries BC: Maintenance and Cohesion," *Or* 47 (1978) 74–90; A. Dandamayev, "Egyptians in Babylonia in the 6th–5th Centuries BC," in *La circulation des biens, des personnes et des idées dans le Proche-Orient ancien* (ed. Dominique Charpin and Francis Joannès; Paris: Editions Recherche sur les civilisations, 1992) 321–25; Olaf Pedersen, "Foreign Professionals in Babylon: Evidence from the Archive in the Palace of Nebuchadnezzar II," in *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia* (ed. W. H. van Soldt; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor Het Nabije Oosten, 2005) 267–72; Johannes Hackl and Michael Jursa, "Egyptians in Babylonia in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Periods," in *Exile and Return* (ed. Jonathan Stökl and C. Waerzeggers; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015) 157–80; Tero Alstola, *Judeans in Babylonia: A Study of Deportees in the Sixth and Fifth Centuries BCE* (CHANE 109; Leiden: Brill, 2020) 58–101. On merchants' interactions with the temples, see Michael Jursa, *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia in the First Millennium BC* (Munster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010) 580–82.

²⁶ E.g., agricultural workers, craftsmen, carpenters, shipbuilders, merchants, musicians, gardeners, overseers for deportees, guards, mercenaries, palace servants, temple slaves.

²⁷ Yigal Bloch, "Judeans in Sippar and Susa during the First Century of the Babylonian Exile: Assimilation and Perseverance under Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Rule," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 1 (2014) 119–72, nos. 1–2 (intermarriage), nos. 3–5 (interchanges with temple personnel); Tero Alstola, "Judean Merchants in Babylonia and Their Participation in Long-Distance Trade," *WO* 47 (2017) 25–51. Hackl and Jursa, "Egyptians in Babylonia," 162–63, 171–72 (Egyptian engaging in trade with the Ebabbar temple).

(455–403 BCE) provide glimpses into regular economic transactions between Babylonians, Persians, Medes, Egyptians, and Judeans at Nippur.²⁸

The establishment of Seleucid rule does not seem to have suddenly and drastically changed many aspects of social and cultural life in Babylonia and, despite the dearth of material evidence for this period, it is reasonable to assume that there would be some continuity in ethnic diversity and cross-cultural interactions into the early Hellenistic era. Along with this would be the added element of an increase in the presence of Greco-Macedonians in some locales such as Babylon.²⁹ Arrian of Nicomedia later reports that Alexander left behind soldiers there, and an inscribed pottery fragment (ostrakon) of the early third century shows that there was a garrison of Greco-Macedonian soldiers at Babylon; but the new foundation of Seleucia on the Tigris (about 60 km north of Babylon) was the Seleucid center, and it seems that only in the time of Antiochus IV (175–164 BCE) was there a larger influx and organization of Greco-Macedonian settlers and the creation of a community of “citizens” (*politai*) at Babylon itself.³⁰ Cuneiform tablets discovered further south in Babylonia at Uruk suggest that Greeks lived side-by-side with the indigenous population at least by the late third century, as there is evidence of intermarriage between elite native populations and Greco-Macedonians.³¹ Clearly, then, ongoing

²⁸ Michael David Coogan, “Life in the Diaspora: Jews at Nippur in the Fifth Century BC,” *BA* 37 (1974) 6–12; Alstola, *Judeans in Babylonia*, 162–222. Place names near Nippur point to settlements of Milidyans (from eastern Asia Minor), Syrians, Philistines, Egyptians, and Arabs. See Eph’al, “Western Minorities,” 80–87.

²⁹ For a general discussion of Hellenistic colonization and indigenous populations, see Pierre Briant, “Colonisation hellénistique et populations indigènes,” *Collection de l’Institut des Sciences et Techniques de l’Antiquité* 269 (1982) 227–80. On balancing the presence of Greeks in Babylonia (particularly at Uruk and Babylon) with significant continuity in Babylonian life, see Susan Sherwin-White, “Seleucid Babylonia: A Case Study for the Installation and Development of Greek Rule,” in *Hellenism in the East* (ed. Kuhrt and Sherwin-White), 20–21 and throughout; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, 141–87; Julien Monerie, “Les communautés grecques en Babylonie (viie–iiiie s. av. J.–C.),” *Pallas. Revue d’études antiques* 89 (2012) 51–63. On lower levels of Hellenization, see Joachim Oelsner, “Hellenization of the Babylonian Culture?,” in *Ideologies as Intercultural Phenomena: Proceedings of the Third Annual Symposium of the Assyrian and Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project* (ed. Antonio Panaino and Giovanni Pettinato; Melammu Symposia 3; Milan: Mimesis, 2002) 183–96.

³⁰ Arrian, *Anab.* 3.16–34. Cf. Diodorus, *Library* 17.64.5. Susan M. Sherwin-White, “A Greek Ostrakon from Babylon of the Early Third Century B.C.,” *ZPE* 47 (1982) 51–70. See also R. J. van der Spek, “Multi-Ethnicity and Ethnic Segregation in Hellenistic Babylon,” in *Ethnic Constructs in Antiquity* (ed. Ton Derks and Nico Roymans; *The Role of Power and Tradition*; Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009) 101–16, although his claim that ethnic groups were segregated is not convincing. For convincing critique of the idea of segregation, see Philippe Clancier, “The Polis of Babylon: An Historiographical Approach,” in *Hellenism and the Local Communities of the Eastern Mediterranean* (ed. Boris Chrubasik and Daniel King; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) 69–77.

³¹ This is based on the presence of Greek names or Greek-Akkadian double names in Babylonian families. See Stephanie M. Langin-Hooper and Laurie E. Pearce, “Mammonymy, Maternal-Line Names, and Cultural Identification: Clues from the Onomasticon of Hellenistic Uruk,” *JAOS* 134 (2014) 194–200. Cf. Joachim Oelsner, “Griechen in Babylonien und die einheimischen Tempel

contacts between peoples at the local level are by no means hypothetical, and it is in these social encounters that, I propose, circulating ancestral traditions and ethnic discourses such as the ones I am about to outline could be deployed in a variety of ways, and not only by literate priestly figures like Bel-re'ushu.

The most noteworthy section of Bel-re'ushu's *Babylonian Matters* for our purposes is in book one. Here, for the first time, we encounter an elaborated claim by a member of a people under Seleucid rule that virtually all aspects of human civilization came from ancestors of his own ethnic group and not, therefore, from any other people, Egyptians, Judeans, Syrians, Persians, Greeks, and Macedonians presumably included.³² The work apparently began with a description of the first inhabitants of Babylonia who "lived in an uncivilized manner, like wild animals." This was interrupted by a revelation to these wild humans by a fish-man figure sent by the gods, named Oannes, and with civilizing results. According to Syncellus's summary of Polyhistor, Bel-re'ushu then explains that the fish-man Oannes:

transmits to humanity knowledge of letters, of calculations (μαθημάτων), and of skills (τεχνῶν) of all types. It also teaches the founding of cities, the establishment of temples, and the introduction of laws and land measurement, as well as showing them seeds and the gathering of fruits. In general, it transmits to humanity all that pertains to civilized life. *From that time, nothing else has been discovered.* With the setting of the sun, this creature Oannes again submerges into the sea, and spends the nights in the sea.³³

Beyond these areas of practical wisdom, Oannes also reveals the origins of the cosmos itself along the lines of what is preserved in the creation epic, *Enuma elish*, with Babylon's patron deity (Marduk in Babylonian terms) creating the universe from the carcass of the sea-monster goddess (Tiamat).

Bel-re'ushu's depiction of the origins of civilization here is heavily indebted to Mesopotamian traditions that circulated—both orally and in written form—for centuries leading up to this time. So it would be problematic to argue that it is primarily a Hellenized picture of a cultural hero or lawgiver, as Geert de Breucker and Jeremy McInerney do in quite different ways.³⁴ The Oannes figure is a clear

in hellenistischer Zeit," in *La circulation des biens* (ed. Charpin and Joannès), 341–46; idem, "Hellenization," 190–91; Omar Coloru, "Seleucid Settlements: Between Ethnic Identity and Mobility," *Electrum* 20 (2013) 37–56.

³² For a study of how similar competitive discourses continued into medieval Islam, see William F. McCants, *Founding Gods, Inventing Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

³³ BNJ 680 F1b = Syncellus, *Chronography* 28–29; translation from *The Chronography of George Syncellus* (trans. Adler and Tuffin), 38–39, with adaptations, emphasis added. Cf. BNJ 680 F4a.

³⁴ Breucker, "Berossus and the Construction of a Near Eastern Cultural History"; idem, "Berossus between Tradition and Innovation." McInerney rightly sidesteps the Greek "historiography" problem but nonetheless presumes that the Oannes fish-man figure itself is "reworked for a Greek audience" and fits a Greek image of a lawgiver or culture hero; Jeremy McInerney, "Fish or Man, Babylonian or Greek? Oannes between Cultures," in *Interactions between Animals and Humans in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (ed. Thorsten Fögen and Edmund Thomas; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017) 263–69. On Bel-re'ushu's access to Mesopotamian mythology, also see Haubold, *Greece and Mesopotamia*, 144–45,

instance of the fish-men sages (*apkallu*) attested in Sumerian and Akkadian traditions. The notion of these pre-flood sages is very old, but roughly contemporary with Bel-re'ushu there are two main versions listing seven sages—one a king list from Uruk and the other a protective incantation from Uruk. These lists begin with the figure Uan (Sumerian) or Adapa (Akkadian) as the first sage, the equivalent of our Oannes.³⁵

Key components in early versions of the story of the first wise man, Adapa, demonstrate how closely linked Bel-re'ushu's tale of Oannes is to these old traditions. In published Akkadian fragments of the story "Adapa and the South Wind," Adapa, as "the seed of humankind" (D, line 12), is made wise by Ea, god of wisdom, whose home is in the waters.³⁶ A summary statement in a surviving fragment (A, line 3) dating to the seventh century BCE emphasizes how Adapa then instructs other humans regarding this knowledge: "He [Ea] perfected him [Adapa] with great intelligence, to give instruction about the ordinance of the earth. To him, he [Ea] gave wisdom, but he did not give eternal life" (fragment A, lines 3–4).³⁷ The story then outlines Adapa's activities that flow from this newly acquired wisdom, including his engagement in baking, navigating by boat, and fishing (lines 5–15). As the god of wisdom, Ea, or Enki, was of course frequently associated with instituting key components of civilization long before Bel-re'ushu's time. In the Sumerian poem "Enki and the World Order," for instance, Enki (Ea's Sumerian equivalent) installs a god over each of the most important crafts or skills, including agriculture, bricklaying, building, animal-keeping, measuring, and weaving.³⁸ But a mythical fish-man is not involved as mediator in that particular tale. So these notions of Babylonians being the first to engage in civilized forms of life were fully established and circulating long before Greco-Macedonians were ruling Babylon.

and Stephanie Dalley, "First Millennium BC Variation in *Gilgamesh*, *Atrahasis*, the Flood Story and the *Epic of Creation*: What Was Available to Berossus?," in *The World of Berossus* (ed. Haubold et al.), 165–76. Cf. Paul D. Hanson, "Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6–11," *JBL* 96 (1977) 227–29, who rightly emphasizes Sumerian and Akkadian traditions.

³⁵ F. A. M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits: The Ritual Texts* (Cuneiform Monographs 1; Groningen: Styx, 1992) 65–85; Shlomo Izre'el, *Adapa and the South Wind: Language Has the Power of Life and Death* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001) 1–4; Helge S. Kvanvig, *Primeval History: Babylonian, Biblical, and Enochic; An Intertextual Reading* (JSJSup 149; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 107–58. For a list of occurrences of Uan specifically, see Michael P. Streck, "Oannes," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* (ed. Dietz Otto Edzard and Michael P. Streck; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003) 1–3. Cf. Géza Komoróczy, "Berossos and the Mesopotamian Literature," *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 21 (1973) 144–46; Benjamin R. Foster, "Wisdom and the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Or* 43 (1974) 344–54.

³⁶ On the Adapa myth, see Izre'el, *Adapa and the South Wind*; Antoine Cavigneaux, "Une version Sumérienne de la légende d'Adapa (Textes de Tell Haddad X)," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie* 104 (2014) 1–41; Sara J. Milstein, "The Origins of Adapa," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie* 105 (2015) 30–41 (comparison of the versions).

³⁷ Translation adapted from Izre'el, *Adapa and the South Wind*, 93.

³⁸ See Samuel Noah Kramer and John Maier, *Myths of Enki, the Crafty God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Cf. Richard E. Averbeck, "Myth, Ritual, and Order in 'Enki and the World Order,'" *JAOS* 123 (2003) 757–71.

In Bel-re'ushu's story, the wisdom acquired by the earliest Babylonians in this way was then preserved by Ziusudra/Xisouthros (the Atrahasis- or Noah-like figure), who in anticipation of the flood buries at Sippar all writings concerning the revelation of Oannes for future generations (*BNJ* 680 F4b = Syncellus, *Chronography* 31–32). With rediscovery, these writings then become the basis for reconstructing Babylonian and subsequent societies. The entire picture here seems more to reflect existing Sumerian, Akkadian, and Babylonian traditions concerning the origins of civilized life, traditions that could be deployed by other Babylonians (or nearby peoples) familiar with them beyond just Bel-re'ushu.³⁹

In this way, Babylonian ancestors are portrayed as the specially chosen recipients and carriers of all major areas of human culture. Long circulating traditions could nonetheless be utilized to counter other peoples who claimed that their own group was responsible for the origin or transmission of civilization. This competitive function seems clear in Bel-re'ushu's emphasis on nothing significant being discovered after this revelation to early Babylonians. The fact that he places this revelation to Babylonians “in the first year”—an incredible 432,000 years before the flood—helps to ensure that no other people, including Egyptians, Assyrians (or Syrians), and the now ruling Greco-Macedonians, could claim an older origin for the organization of human society generally.⁴⁰

Nonetheless, Bel-re'ushu also relates subsequent teachings by other wise figures, whether fish-men or humans (e.g., Syncellus, *Chronography* 39–40). Josephus cites Bel-re'ushu as placing in the tenth generation after the flood an important “just man” who was particularly knowledgeable about astrological phenomena, with Josephus claiming this was actually the Hebrew Abraham (*Ant.* 1.158). Bel-re'ushu emphasizes important contributions to civilization by subsequent Babylonian kings as well, particularly Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 BCE).⁴¹ Nebuchadnezzar advances Babylonian civilization through widespread building programs, renovating the temple of Bel, reinforcing the protective walls of Babylon, and building a very impressive palace (according to a passage preserved in Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.135–141).⁴²

In regard to Nebuchadnezzar's achievements, Josephus claims that Bel-re'ushu's narrative here specifically aims at “critiquing Greek authors for wrongly thinking that Babylon was founded by the Assyrian Semiramis” (*Ag. Ap.* 1.142). A good early candidate (ca. 400 BCE) for such a Greek author would be Ctesias of Cnidus, who held this alternative view that privileged an Assyrian figure over a Babylonian one.⁴³ Geert de Breucker's study of Babylonian cuneiform historical traditions in the

³⁹ Cf. Haubold, *Greece and Mesopotamia*, 144.

⁴⁰ Syncellus, *Chronography* 30. Cf. Dillery, *Clio's Other Sons*, 74–77.

⁴¹ See Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “Berossus on Late Babylonian History,” *Oriental Studies* (2006) 116–49.

⁴² On Nebuchadnezzar, see Haubold, *Greece and Mesopotamia*, 127–77.

⁴³ See Diodorus, *Library* 2.7.2, citing Ctesias, *Persian Matters*, fragment 1b, collected in Andrew Nichols, “The Complete Fragments of Ctesias of Cnidus: Translation and Commentary with an Introduction” (PhD diss., University of Florida, 2008). On the issue of Bel-re'ushu's critique of

Persian and Hellenistic eras emphasizes how scholars associated with the temple of Marduk may have critiqued current regimes by relating incidents in which a Babylonian king of the past “successfully fought against foreign domination,” including against the Assyrians. One of these earlier traditions that is shared both by the “Epic of Nabopolassar” and by Bel-re’ushu is the presentation of Nabopolassar (626–605 BCE) as a liberator who successfully stops the Assyrian king as foreign aggressor.⁴⁴ So these traditions appear in Bel-re’ushu’s writing in a context of rivalries with other peoples, including the formerly ascendant Assyrians. Similarly, Kuhrt suggests that Bel-re’ushu sometimes presents Babylonian kings as a “counterbalance” to the image of an idealized Egyptian king Senwosret, to whom we will return soon in connection with Artapanus.⁴⁵ So it seems Bel-re’ushu is concerned to position his own people in relation to those such as Assyrians and Egyptians and not merely the recently ascendant Greco-Macedonian power-holders.

■ Manetho on Egyptians

Biographical information regarding Manetho claims he was born in Sebennytos and was active as a priest in Heliopolis in the Delta region of Egypt, about thirty or so kilometers north of the capital of Memphis.⁴⁶ Although we lack evidence for ethnic diversity and other matters at Heliopolis, the long-term presence in nearby Memphis of Ionians (Greeks) and Carians since the sixth century and the large influx of Greeks and Greco-Macedonians with the establishment of a Ptolemaic center make the presence of Greeks in the region assured.⁴⁷ There was a Persian satrapal palace at Memphis itself, and Judean military settlers are also attested in the Persian era, at least further south at Elephantine.⁴⁸ And the later evidence for Syrians, Judeans, Idumeans, and others at Memphis is suggestive of potential options for ethnic interactions in nearby places like Heliopolis.⁴⁹ Wherever Manetho was from in Egypt, however, the potential for ethnic diversity in this period is significant,

Greek authors, see Tuplin, “Berossus and Greek Historiography,” 186–88. He is appropriately cautious in his approach to supposedly Hellenistic characteristics of the work.

⁴⁴ See Geert de Breucker, “Heroos and Sinners: Babylonian Kings in Cuneiform Historiography of the Persian and Hellenistic Periods,” in *Political Memory in and after the Persian Empire* (ed. Jason M. Silverman and Caroline Waerzeggers; ANEM 13; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015) 77–78, on the “Epic of Nabopolassar” and *BNJ* 680 F7c–d. Cf. Abydenos in *BNJ* 685 F5.

⁴⁵ Kuhrt, “Berossus’ *Babyloniaka*,” 55–56. Cf. Harland, “Syrians call you Astarte.”

⁴⁶ *BNJ* 609, fragments 3, 77, 80. Philippa Lang, “Manetho (609),” in *Brill’s New Jacoby Online* (ed. Ian Worthington; Leiden: Brill, 2014).

⁴⁷ Dorothy J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (2nd ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) 87–90; Moyer, *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism*, 51–55.

⁴⁸ Henry P. Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire in Achaemenid Egypt* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019) 27–94; Joseph Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt: From Rameses II to Emperor Hadrian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) 21–25.

⁴⁹ See Dorothy J. Thompson, “The Idumeans of Memphis and the Ptolemaic *Politeumata*,” in *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia* (Naples: Centro Internazionale per lo Studio dei Papiri Ercolanesi, 1984) 1069–75; eadem, *Memphis under the Ptolemies*, 77–98.

particularly in main centers or in rural areas where soldiers were settled. Further south, in villages of the Arsinoites, for instance, there were Greeks, Thracians, Lycians, Carians, Mysians, Syrians, and Judeans—many of them soldiers or ex-soldiers in the Ptolemaic army—settled alongside one another beginning in the third and second centuries BCE.⁵⁰ So once again it makes good sense to consider the scenario that claims to civilizational priority in elite sources may sometimes reflect discourses within interactions among different peoples on the ground in a variety of social settings.

Manetho was writing just decades after Bel-re'ushu (perhaps after 256 BCE), but not likely with *Babylonian Matters* in hand (as sometimes believed);⁵¹ the surviving evidence regarding Manetho's claims for his own people on the origins of civilization seem less comprehensive than the tale of Oannes and the Babylonians.⁵² There are some clear assertions by Manetho regarding historical Egyptian contributions to society nonetheless.

If we want to find something similar to the Babylonian story of Oannes but with Egyptians as recipients of civilization, it is not to Manetho that we need to turn but to the expressly *made-up* tradition in Plato regarding the Egyptian deity Thoth (Theuth) teaching the king Thamos. In other words, we need to turn to Greek imaginations regarding Egyptians, which may or may not have some relation to Egyptian tales.⁵³ Plato has Socrates playfully engage Phaedrus with an expressly phony story in which the god Thoth introduces to the king and then to all Egyptians key aspects of civilization: numbers, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, dice, and writing.⁵⁴ It is true that in Egyptian literature itself the lunar deity Thoth was credited with introducing temple-cult and the divine words to regulate ritual, and he was sometimes referred to as “lord of writing.”⁵⁵ But the list of other contributions in Socrates's talk do not seem central in *early* Egyptian concepts of this deity. Isocrates's sarcastic discourse on the Egyptian king Busiris (perhaps dating to the 370s BCE) attributes a similar list of inventions to Busiris, again reflecting Greek

⁵⁰ For a more detailed study of ethnic diversity in the Fayum, see Harland, “‘Syrians Call You Astarte.’”

⁵¹ Based on references in Syncellus, it has often been assumed that Manetho read and in some sense imitated Berossus's writing, but the evidence for any direct relation is extremely thin. See Moyer, “Berossus and Manetho,” 213–32.

⁵² Manetho's awareness of Arsinoites as a designation for the *nome* requires a date after 256 BCE. See Moyer, “Berossus and Manetho,” 214–15, 222. For translations, see W. G. Waddell, *Manetho* (LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), and *NBJ* 609.

⁵³ On this, see Phiroze Vasunia, *The Gift of the Nile: Hellenizing Egypt from Aeschylus to Alexander* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

⁵⁴ Plato, *Phaedrus* 274–275 (ca. 370–355 BCE). Cf. *idem*, *Phileb.* 18b–d.

⁵⁵ Patrick Boylan, *Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt: A Study of Some Aspects of Theological Thought in Ancient Egypt* (London: Milford, 1922) 88–103. Later, Philo of Byblos has his expressly Phoenician Tautos (who is compared to Thoth) as the inventor of writing and record-keeping (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 1.9.24). On the Greek identification with Hermes and a list of inventions, see Diodorus, *Library* 1.16.

characterizations of Egypt.⁵⁶ Whether Plato or Isocrates had reliable information about similar tales that circulated among Egyptians themselves at the time (beyond the connection of Thoth with writing) remains unclear. To my knowledge, no such story of Thoth as inventor of so many Hermes-like things is preserved in the fragments of Manetho or in any other relatively early source.⁵⁷

When it comes to the priority of Egyptian culture, Manetho's *Egyptian Matters* does trace Egyptian rulers back to the gods, and this suggests the great antiquity and therefore superiority of Egypt (*BNJ* 609). As a reader of Manetho's intact work, Syncellus also complains that Manetho, like Bel-re'ushu, "wishes to glorify his own people" (*Chronography* 17.10–20). And it is possible that Manetho's perspective was comparable to the Egyptians from Thebes who (according to Diodorus, at least) "say that they are the earliest of all humans, and that among them were the first people to discover love of wisdom (φιλοσοφίαν) and study of the stars" (Diodorus, *Library* 1.50). Yet, in the surviving fragments of Manetho there are no substantial narratives claiming that the earliest Egyptians were the source of civilization in a way that is comparable to the legend of Oannes or to Socrates's story (in Plato) about the Egyptian origins of all civilization. Of course, it remains a possibility that lost portions of Manetho's work did contain such myths or claims of superiority for Egyptians over against Greeks or other peoples.

Josephus does highlight the fact that Manetho critiques some Greek characterizations of Egypt, and two later sources refer to a work in which Manetho engaged in *Criticism of Herodotos* (if this was a separate work).⁵⁸ So this may indicate Manetho's active attempts to directly counter at least some Greek perspectives on Egyptians.

Although there is no thoroughgoing Oannes- or Thoth-like revelatory episode in the surviving portions of Manetho's work, it is still noteworthy that the remains do present specific Egyptian gods or kings as the originators of important aspects of civilization and human knowledge. So, for instance, in one fragment, an Egyptian god that is the son of Ammon and labeled "Dionysos" introduces the vine to humanity. Several early Egyptian kings make important advancements: the second king of the first dynasty (Athis = Djer [?]) contributes to medical knowledge (*BNJ* 609 F2 and F3b), and the second king of the third dynasty (Tosorthros = Djoser, ca. 2667–2648 BCE) advances medicine, building techniques, and writing (*BNJ* 609 F2). Manetho also relates the military feats of a king, Senwosret (Sesostris in

⁵⁶ Anthony Preus, "Thoth and Apollo: Greek Myths of the Origin of Philosophy," *Méthexis* 11 (1998) 116–18.

⁵⁷ But do see the later Isis aretalogy from Kyme (2nd cent. CE), claiming to be a copy of a monument from Memphis, which begins with the idea that Isis was taught by Hermes (not expressly identified with Thoth in the inscription) and discovered both sacred and demotic letters with him (*IKyme* 41, line 3). The earliest date for any extant version of the so-called Memphite aretalogy is, likely, the 1st cent. BCE. See Ian Moyer, "The Memphite Self-Revelations of Isis and Egyptian Religion in the Hellenistic and Roman Aegean," *Religion in the Roman Empire* 3 (2017) 318–43.

⁵⁸ Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.73–74 = *BNJ* 609 F1 and *BNJ* 609 F13.

this transliteration), who is said to have conquered all of Asia and Europe as far as Thrace. Manetho's account stresses just how important this Senwosret was, claiming that the king was considered second only to the pharaoh-god Osiris himself (*BNJ* F2 and F3b). Tales that circulated in oral and written form around figures like the king Senwosret take us well beyond educated circles where Manetho was active and provide a glimpse into the popular side of native perspectives among Egyptians, as I explore in another piece.⁵⁹

■ Artapanus and Others on Judeans

Alongside Babylonians and Egyptians, Judeans were among those who developed their own tales of great achievements and could employ them in interaction with competing claims of other peoples. Here, we are still concerned with the first two centuries following Alexander of Macedon rather than in later developments in Josephus or others. Scholarly discussions of alternative tales of the "exodus" or expulsion of the ancestors of Judeans (some of them clearly anti-Judean tales), for instance, show how important it is to consider local Egyptian settings where such competing tales circulated among Judeans, Egyptians, and Greeks rather than imagining that such discourses only took place at a literary level.⁶⁰ It is not always the current Greco-Macedonian power-holders that are the focus of ethnic rivalries when Judeans are involved, and local situations among various strata of the population must be kept in mind when approaching Judean tales of the origins of civilization as well.

Artapanus's work comes to us from Polyhistor via Eusebius's *Preparation for the Gospel* from the fourth century CE.⁶¹ It seems Artapanus wrote some time after the production of the Septuagint Greek translation of the Judean scriptures around 250 BCE and before Polyhistor's summary in the mid-first century BCE.⁶² But Artapanus perhaps fits best some time soon after the early second century—about a century or so after Bel-re'ushu and Manetho—in light of several details that seem to pertain to the time of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–204 BCE) and to

⁵⁹ See Harland, "Syrians Call You Astarte."

⁶⁰ See Claude Aziza, "L'utilisation polémique du récit de l'Exode chez les écrivains alexandrins (IV^e siècle av. J.-C.-I^{er} siècle ap. J.-C.)," *ANRW* 2.20.1 (1987) 41–65; Lucia Raspe, "Manetho on the Exodus: A Reappraisal," *JSQ* 5 (1998) 124–55; and Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) 8–9, 17–21, 163–69, with citations of earlier scholarship on this issue.

⁶¹ For some recent studies of Artapanus, see Holger M. Zellentin, "The End of Jewish Egypt: Artapanus and the Second Exodus," in *Antiquity in Antiquity* (ed. Gregg Gardner and Kevin Osterloh; TSAJ 123; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 27–73; Daniel Barbu, "Artapan. Introduction historique et historiographique," in *Interprétations de Moïse. Égypte, Judée, Grèce et Rome* (ed. Philippe Borgeaud et al.; Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture 10; Leiden: Brill, 2009) 1–23; Caterina Moro, "L'historien Artapan et le passé multiethnique," in *Interprétations de Moïse* (ed. Borgeaud et al.), 41–55.

⁶² John J. Collins, "Artapanus," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1985) 890–91.

a temporarily successful rebellion that instated Chaonnophris as native pharaoh at Thebes from 199 to 186 BCE.⁶³

There is no direct evidence that would allow us to identify Artapanus with certainty as a Judean settled in Egypt. But the overall focus of the fragments and the knowledge of Egyptian events in them does suggest that both Artapanus and his implied audience would primarily be Greek-speaking Judeans settled in Egypt, likely in connection with a family history of service in the Ptolemaic army.⁶⁴ Because we cannot locate him with precision, it is difficult to be specific about the ethnic groups he would have encountered in his life beyond the general picture we get from Ptolemaic Egypt overall: this once again points to a mixture of Greco-Macedonians, Thracians, Judeans, Carians, Lycians, Phoenicians, and others, many of them soldiers or former soldiers (particularly beginning with the army formed by Ptolemy I Soter, from 305 to 282 BCE).⁶⁵ Artapanus's depiction of figures from the biblical narratives illustrates the competitive atmosphere in which stories of one's own cultural heroes might be remembered, retold, and transformed in social interactions with other peoples. Our focus here needs to remain on the question of what evidence there is for Judeans echoing or actively constructing ideologies that cut against alternative notions that Greeks, Egyptians, Babylonians, or other peoples were the instigators of the most civilized forms of wisdom and societal arrangements. However, we should not presume the primacy of written sources when considering the origins of Artapanus's tales, as some scholars do.⁶⁶ Instead, as both Tessa Rajak and Donna Runnalls recognize with respect to Moses material, it is likely that Artapanus and later authors such as Josephus are sometimes building their presentations on more widely circulating oral traditions, traditions which could therefore be employed in other social situations on the ground.⁶⁷

Polyhistor presents the portion of Artapanus's work that deals with Abraham, Joseph, and Moses. Each of these figures is depicted as introducing or developing important aspects of human civilization, and Artapanus sets all of this in Egypt itself. In this way, any claims that Egyptians were the oldest source of human civilization

⁶³ See Zellentin, "The End," 53–54, on Chaonnophris. Zellentin places Artapanus's writing after 118 BCE, but I do not find his other arguments concerning allusions to later historical figures or events quite as convincing as his point about Chenephris/Chaonnophris.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 28–31.

⁶⁵ See, for instance, Marcel Launey, *Recherches sur les armées hellénistiques* (Paris: de Boccard, 1950); Christelle Fischer-Bovet, *Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt* (Armies of the Ancient World; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁶⁶ Collins, *From Athens to Jerusalem*, does not seem to engage the possibility of oral traditions in his study of fragmentary Judean authors.

⁶⁷ Tessa Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction* (AGJU 48; Leiden: Brill, 2001 [1978]) 257–66; Donna Runnalls, "Moses' Ethiopian Campaign," *JSJ* 14 (1983) 135–56. Now also see Thomas Römer, "Tracking Some 'Censored' Moses Traditions Inside and Outside the Hebrew Bible," *HBAI* 1 (2012) 64–76. On alternative stories of the "Exodos" as circulating folktales, see Philip R. Davies, "Judeans in Egypt: Hebrew and Greek Stories," in *Did Moses Speak Attic?: Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; JSOTSup 317; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001) 108–28.

could more readily be shifted to “Hebrews,” and to their Israelite and Judean heirs specifically. Artapanus has Abraham travel to Egypt to teach the Egyptian king “astrology,” staying there for thirty years and leaving behind Hebrew settlers.⁶⁸ So the story overcomes potential Babylonian or Chaldean claims to preeminence in astrological knowledge. Abraham, who in the Genesis narrative is from Ur of the Chaldees (i.e., a Babylonian context), is represented as possessing this kind of knowledge so often claimed by Babylonians. Ongoing debates concerning who was responsible for introducing knowledge of the stars (with Egyptians often competing with Chaldeans or Babylonians in the discourse) is reflected in the Egyptian astrological handbook attributed to Petosiris and Nechepso (ca. 150–100 BCE) and, later, in the work of the Egyptian priest Chairemon (writing ca. 30–65 CE).⁶⁹ In this way, such tales of Abraham could serve to counter both Egyptian and Babylonian claims of cultural importance.

Before continuing with Artapanus, a few more words are in order regarding alternative Abraham stories which circulated in this same period. Competition with still further peoples is integral to stories presented in a work attributed to Eupolemus (again from Polyhistor = *BNJ* 723), who may have been writing around 158 BCE.⁷⁰ In this version, Abraham was expressly born in Babylonia and therefore learned the “Chaldean craft” there in the tenth generation. Further on in Eupolemus’s passage, however, it is clarified that earlier—in the seventh generation after Adam—Enoch himself was the source of that same astrological understanding. This information then disseminated within Babylonia from Enoch. This once again places figures from Israelite traditions at the forefront of civilization. Abraham then brought this knowledge deriving from Enoch first to the Phoenicians and then to the Egyptians, with the latter two cultures therefore being seen as derivative of cultural achievements elsewhere. Furthermore, Eupolemus positions the story in relation to Greek claims that astrological knowledge came from Atlas, who, Eupolemus states, was in fact Enoch himself.

Eupolemus seems to be working with stories similar in some respects to those that were employed in the so-called Book of Watchers (especially 1 En. 6–11), at

⁶⁸ Polyhistor in Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.18.1. On Abraham as source of astrological knowledge, see Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus’s Interpretation of the Bible* (HCS 27; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) 223–89, and Annette Yoshiko Reed, “Abraham as Chaldean Scientist and Father of the Jews: Josephus, ‘Ant.’ 1.154–168, and the Greco-Roman Discourse About Astronomy/Astrology,” *JSJ* 35 (2004) 119–58. Contrast *Sibylline Oracles* 3.218–230, where Abraham and his descendants are dissociated from astrological knowledge.

⁶⁹ P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) 435–37. P. W. van der Horst, *The Way of Life of the Egyptian Priests According to Chairemon* (ed. M. Heerma van Voss, E. J. Sharpe, and R. J. Z. Werblowsky; Studies in Egyptian Religion 43; Leiden: Brill, 1982) 8–13 (frag. 2) = *BNJ* 618 F7.

⁷⁰ Polyhistor via Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.17.2–9. See Ted Kaizer, “Eupolemus,” in *Brill’s New Jacoby Online* (ed. Ian Worthington; Leiden: Brill, 2010). Also see Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.18, which is attributed to an anonymous author.

least with a prominence for Enoch as the recipient of heavenly wisdom.⁷¹ In this part of 1 Enoch (ca. 200 BCE or earlier), many aspects of human civilization do indeed result from revelations by the fallen angels (led by Azazel, or Asael) to the human women, but in this case (unlike Eupolemus's alternative story) they are wrongly revealed and lead to the decline—not advancement—of human civilization.⁷² In particular, the angels' revelations concerning metalwork (disseminating war), ornamentation for women (disseminating lust), roots (for sorcery and magical healing), and the heavenly bodies (astrology) ultimately result in the Israelite god's judgment with the flood (as reworked from Gen 5–6).⁷³ Although not stated clearly, this negative portrayal of certain kinds of astrology in 1 Enoch could function to portray Babylonians or Egyptians negatively.⁷⁴ While such peoples may have claimed the superiority of their own astrological knowledge, that knowledge could now be attributed to the fallen angels or their demonic offspring (the spirits of the giants) by apocalyptic Judeans familiar with these traditions. In 1 Enoch itself, of course, this improper revelation by fallen angels is thankfully followed by Enoch's own heavenly tour, resulting in a legitimate source of wisdom concerning the universe.

As the seventh antediluvian figure in the Genesis narrative who is later seen as the recipient of heavenly secrets regarding the stars, Enoch was comparable to the seventh king in the Sumerian king list, Enmeduranki of Sippar. Andrei Orlov's recent work renews attention to the potential competitive dimension to these traditions.⁷⁵

⁷¹ See also *Jubilees* (4.15) which, like Eupolemus, has the angels sent by God to instruct humanity (rather than planning to rebel); things still go off track with fornication. The post-flood rediscovery (by Kainan) of an inscription containing the Watcher's knowledge of astrology specifically is viewed negatively (8.3–4). Cf. *Sibylline Oracles* 1.87–103, although in this case they are presented as human inventors.

⁷² On the date of 1 Enoch, see John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 47. On fallen angels and “culture-heroes” of Mesopotamia, see Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven.” Cf. Richard Bauckham, “The Fall of the Angels as the Source of Philosophy in Hermias and Clement of Alexandria,” *VC* 39 (1985) 313–30.

⁷³ See also a twist on these traditions in *Sibylline Oracles* 1.87–103, where there is a picture of a righteous generation of Watchers who invented plows, carpentry, sailing, astronomy, divination, and medicine. There, it is the generation after the Watchers where “terrible men” predominate.

⁷⁴ Annette Yoshiko Reed argues that this early Enoch material is generally lacking in anti-Greek or anti-Hellenistic postures but does reflect competition with Babylonians and Egyptians. See Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 58–83. She does not fully explore the elements I highlight here, however, which do point in a similar direction.

⁷⁵ Andrei Orlov, “The Learned Savant Who Guards the Secrets of the Great Gods’: Evolution of the Roles and Titles of the Seventh Antediluvian Hero in Mesopotamian and Enochic Traditions [part 1],” *Scrinium* 1 (2005) 248–64; idem, “The Learned Savant Who Guards the Secrets of the Great Gods’: Evolution of the Roles and Titles of the Seventh Antediluvian Hero in Mesopotamian and Enochic Traditions [part 2],” *Scrinium* 2 (2006) 165–213. Cf. James C. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition* (CBQMS 16; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984).

In some Mesopotamian legends and ritual materials, Enmeduranki was the first to receive from the gods knowledge regarding divination (discerning information from deities by observing oil on water and by examining attributes of the livers of sacrificed animals) and mathematical calculations regarding heavenly bodies.⁷⁶ So the competitive aspect of employing these Babylonian (previously Akkadian and Sumerian) and Israelite figures seems quite clear in other respects as well. Yet it is noteworthy that the currently hegemonic Greeks or Greco-Macedonians are not expressly in the competition here. Other ethnic groups seem to be in mind. Different Judeans might be aware of variant stories and utilize them or transform them in different ways. They could do so in a manner that still engaged either directly or indirectly with other peoples and in a way that asserted the preeminence of figures within their own ancestral traditions. This might serve to place Judeans at the top of an ethnic hierarchy with respect to contributions to civilization.

In Artapanus's story of the ancestors of the Judeans, the figure of Joseph is presented as someone who excelled in wisdom and, after his brothers plotted against him, sought the aid of Arabians to be brought to Egypt. There Joseph becomes an administrator of the land and brings order to what was previously a disorganized Egyptian agricultural system. This reorganization of Egypt into districts then works against a system that had previously advantaged the more powerful over the lower strata of the population. Joseph also introduces measurements (*Preparation* 9.23.1–4). Here, Joseph is credited with achievements that are also associated with the Egyptian king Senwosret, a figure I return to below in connection with Artapanus's Moses. Once again, there is an emphasis on the settlement of more Hebrews, including those at the important sites of Heliopolis and Sais. All of this sets the stage for a portrayal of Hebrews specifically, more so than Egyptians, as key contributors to the betterment of Egypt overall. Civilization was introduced by foreigners who immigrated to Egypt—Hebrews, as predecessors of Israelites and Judeans.

Artapanus finally goes into much more detail regarding the great achievements of Moses. As in the biblical narrative, Moses was adopted by a daughter of Egyptian royalty as an infant (*Preparation* 9.27.1–37). As an adult, Moses—expressly identified with the Greek mythical figure Mousaios, the teacher of Orpheus—“transmitted many useful things to humanity.” Moses introduced or invented boats, devices for stone construction, military implements, irrigation methods, and the raising and use of oxen for agriculture. Importantly, he introduced “sacred letters” (i.e., hieroglyphs) and “philosophy.” It is here in the narrative that the currently hegemonic Greeks seem to be among the competitors for a moment. Still, Artapanus seems far more concerned to attribute supposedly Egyptian advancements to Judeans throughout his tales, and the Greeks do not seem at the

⁷⁶ W. G. Lambert, “Enmeduranki and Related Matters,” *JCS* 21 (1967) 130–32. Cf. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 45–46.

forefront. Artapanus emphasizes that Moses was “loved by the populace,” who wanted to offer him god-like honors.

Military feats are added to Moses’s great accomplishments too. Artapanus portrays the local Egyptian king (Chenephris) as envious of Moses’s cultural achievements. The king therefore sends Moses to lead a military campaign against the ostensibly undefeatable Ethiopians, hoping that Moses would die in battle. Instead, Moses succeeds in this incredible feat and even gains the love of the conquered Ethiopians, who adopt the Judean custom of circumcision from Moses.⁷⁷ Furthermore, Moses is credited with founding Heliopolis, making the ibis a sacred bird, and generally identifying all the creatures of Egyptian cults as sacred. Artapanus then narrates Moses’ leadership in freeing the slaves, apparently based on something close to the Septuagint version of the exodus narrative.

David Lenz Tiede convincingly argues that the list of Moses’s contributions to human civilization echoes those in circulating legends associated with an Egyptian king, Senwosret.⁷⁸ And so the main civilizational competitors for Judeans remain Egyptians, not Greeks, in this case. Yet Tiede proposes that Artapanus himself created the link to Moses rather than reflecting oral or written traditions that had already made this connection, which is another very good possibility. Similarly, Holger M. Zellentin goes on a hunt for a hypothetical *written* source on Senwosret, or Sesosis (a proto-Diodorus source), which both Diodorus and Artapanus are supposed to have employed for different purposes.⁷⁹ Such scholarly theories leave out a scenario in which Artapanus was (alongside possible written materials) familiar with circulating oral traditions concerning Senwosret or concerning a Judean presentation of Moses that had already incorporated Senwosret-like accomplishments.⁸⁰ In another article, I extensively explore the deployment of circulating traditions regarding pharaohs like Senwosret in connection with ethnic relations in a case study of the monumental hymns set up by one Isidorus in a temple at Narmouthis in the Arsinoite district.⁸¹ Scholarly theories that *presume*

⁷⁷ This differs considerably from Josephus’s story of Moses in Ethiopia (*Ant.* 2.238–257). See Runnalls, “Moses’ Ethiopian Campaign.”

⁷⁸ David Lenz Tiede, *The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker* (SBLDS 1; Missoula, MT: SBL, 1972) 150–67, esp. 164. Cf. Collins, *From Athens to Jerusalem*, 41; Sabrina Inowlocki, “Moïse en Égypte. Religion et politique dans les fragments d’Artapan,” *Revue de philosophie ancienne* 22 (2004) 5–16; Römer, “Tracking Some ‘Censored’ Moses Traditions,” 73–74.

⁷⁹ Zellentin, “The End,” esp. 50–51.

⁸⁰ For variations on Senwosret tales, see: 1) *PCarlsberg* 411–412 (see Ghislaine Widmer, “Pharaoh Maâ-Rê, Pharaoh Amenemhat and Sesostris: Three Figures from Egypt’s Past as Seen in Sources of the Graeco-Roman Period,” in *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies: Copenhagen 23–27 August 1999* [ed. Kim Ryholt; Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2002] 387–93; Kim Ryholt, “A Sesostris Story in Demotic Egyptian and Demotic Literary Exercises [O. Leipzig UB 2217],” in *Honi soit qui mal y pense. Studien zum pharaonischen, griechisch-römischen und spätantiken Ägypten zu Ehren von Heinz-Josef Thissen* [ed. Hermann Knuf et al.; OLA 194; Leuven: Peeters, 2010] 432); 2) Ryholt, “A Sesostris Story,” 432–33; 3) *OLeipzig UB 2217*; and 4) *POxy* 1826; 2466; 3319; 5262, 5263.

⁸¹ Harland, “‘Syrians Call You Astarte.’”

the primacy of written sources (hypothesized or otherwise) also do not take full account of the context explored here regarding common ethnic discourses aimed at bettering the position of one's own group on the hierarchy within local or regional settings. For similar reasons, it does not seem probable that Artapanus was specifically refuting narratives written by Manetho or pseudo-Manetho concerning an "exodus" or expulsion of the ancestors of Judeans, if these narratives already existed in Artapanus's time and context.⁸² Yet the point remains that Artapanus's positive assertion of Judean primacy via the contributions of these Hebrew figures to the advancement of Egyptian—and therefore human—civilization could certainly be deployed to counter alternative, negative characterizations of Judean activities by Egyptians on the ground.⁸³

■ Conclusion

As subjects under Hellenistic hegemony, Babylonians, Egyptians, Judeans, and others could express their own ethnic self-understanding and sense of superiority by, in part, telling stories about their own people's contributions to the advancement of civilization overall. While appearing in literary form, it is realistic to propose that these narratives reflect strategies employed in various social contexts and at different levels of society in order to better the position of one's own ethnic group in relation to other peoples.

Due to the limits of our ancient evidence, we are not able to go further in order to confirm or disconfirm that a variation of any specific tale related by, say, Bel-re'ushu or Artapanus was actually employed in social encounters between peoples on the ground. Yet we have already witnessed references to such local encounters and competitive claims in Diodorus's discussion of Egyptians at Thebes in a later era, for instance (*Library of History* 1.28–19; cf. 1.9.3; 1.50). Furthermore, in a still later period (ca. 165 CE), Lucian of Samosata, who sometimes self-identifies as "Syrian" or "Assyrian" (and somewhat subversively even as a "barbarian"), presents a dialogue which suggests from another angle that the general scenario of ethnic interactions I propose is realistic.⁸⁴ In the dialogue *Toxaris*, Lucian presents as believable a social encounter between a Greek-speaking Scythian immigrant

⁸² For the claim that Artapanus directly counters Manetho, see Collins, *From Athens to Jerusalem*, 40–41; A. M. Denis, "Le portrait de Moïse par l'antisémite Manéthon (III^e s. av. J.-C.) et la réfutation juive de l'historien Artapan," *Le Muséon* 100 (1987) 49–65. For the opposing view, see Zellentin, "The End," 46–48; Tiede, *Charismatic Figure*, 175. On the controversial anti-Judean Manetho material, which cannot be dealt with here, see Raspe, "Manetho on the Exodus."

⁸³ Unconvincing is Erich Gruen's ("Twisted Tales") attempt to remove Artapanus from discussions of ethnicity or "patriotism" and to assert that the purpose of Artapanus (and Greek novels generally) was mere "entertainment."

⁸⁴ For cases where Lucian seems to identify himself with his Syrian and "barbarian" characters, see *Syrian Goddess* 1 ("Assyrian"); *Double Indictment* 14–34 ("Assyrian" and "Syrian" with "barbarian" look and language); *Scythian* 9 ("Syrian" and "barbarian"); *Against the Book Collector* 19 ("Syrian").

(Toxaris) and a Greek (Mnesippos) in a city outside of Athens (*Toxaris* 21).⁸⁵ In this meeting, each of the men relates five tales (in this case about “friendship” rather than the origins of civilization) that circulate among his own people regarding Scythians or Greeks. Overall, the purpose of relating these tales orally—as with the tales in our literary sources by Bel-re’ushu and Artapanus—is to demonstrate the superiority of one person’s ethnic group over the other’s: “Now listen, you extraordinary person, and learn how much more reasonably we ‘barbarians’ distinguish good men than you Greeks do,” states the Scythian in the conversation.⁸⁶

One common corollary of this competitive situation among nondominant peoples was an active engagement with, and refutation of, the imagined or real claims of other peoples in a way that positioned one’s own group in a higher position. While current power-holders like the Greco-Macedonians were among the sparring partners, they were not always as central as they themselves (or some scholars) would have liked.

The subtle reorientations I offer in this piece—moving Greeks and Greek interpretations temporarily to the side in order to consider the perspectives of subject peoples—change our picture of ethnic relations in significant ways. These reorientations also provide hope for reconstructions of some aspects of the social histories of nondominant peoples even though our evidence for them is often limited. Then again, the notion that evidence is limited has often been the alibi in historical studies generally for neglecting nondominant or marginalized populations and segments of populations (e.g., colonized or minoritized peoples, women, lower social strata) and, problematically, for continuing to frame our understanding of the past mainly by means of dominant interests, assumptions, and perspectives.

⁸⁵ On Greek negative stereotypes about Scythians and on interactions between Greeks and Pontic peoples in Greek cities, see Philip A. Harland, “Pontic Diasporas in the Classical and Hellenistic Eras,” *ZPE* 214 (2020) 1–19; idem, “The Most Ignorant Peoples of All.”

⁸⁶ I am indebted to Kim, “Orality,” 301–2, for this connection, although he focuses on transmission from East to West. On the Syrian Lucian’s use of “barbarians,” see Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 119–20.