


Anti-Semitic thought and defense: Ptolemaic Egyptian writers' rewriting of Exodus narrative

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In 1879, Wilhelm Marr coined the term 'Antisemitismus', which aroused extensive discussion in academic circles. With the deepening of research, scholars' research on anti-Semitism gradually traced back to the ancient world. Texts with anti-Semitic thought appeared as early as Ptolemaic Egypt. Essentially, the main purpose of these words were self-justification, a response to the sinful image of the Egyptians in the narrative of Exodus. The early Ptolemaic Egyptian writers got rid of the charges against the Egyptians by rewriting the narrative of Exodus and shifting responsibility for the entire event to the Jews. It is obvious that in the process, the image of the Jewish people has been severely vilified. Although the writers did not express a strong anti-Semitic tendency subjectively, they all expressed a certain degree of anti-Semitic thought objectively. The anti-Semitic thought was inherited by later writers in the Roman world and had a profound impact. This article focuses on the works of three Ptolemaic Egyptian writers and discusses their reasons and influences for rewriting the narrative of the Exodus in combination with their historical background.

Contribution: This article discusses the origin and spread of anti-Semitic thought in the ancient world. It has important reference value for the study of ancient writers' understanding of the Old Testament. At the same time, it has important academic value for the study of Jewish history.

Keywords: anti-Semitic thought; Ptolemy Egypt; self-justification; the narrative of Exodus; Roman world.

Introduction

The term 'Antisemitismus' was first coined by Wilhelm Marr in 1879. Since then, the word has undergone profound changes in connotation as scholars have continued to discuss it. In the initial stage, anti-Semitism referred to opposition to Jews, with a strong racist colour. Subsequently, it was endowed with connotations such as Christian anti-Semitism, Greek-Roman anti-Semitism, and New anti-Semitism. During the nearly century of research on anti-Semitism, the concept has become increasingly open and abstract, and has not yet formed a recognised and authoritative one, and may even be given more meaning in the future. (Li 2021:125).

Although 'anti-Semitism' is a modern term, many scholars still trace it back to the Greco-Roman period. Scholars have had a long-term discussion on whether anti-Semitism existed during this period.¹ The core of the debate is still the concept of the word. In other words, whether and to what extent 'anti-Semitism' existed in the Greco-Roman period depends on how the term is defined. Feldman believed that compared to anti-Semitism, 'Jew hatred' and 'anti-Judaism' are more appropriate terms (Feldman 1993:84). But for Schäfer, the only term he avoided is 'anti-Judaism', thus following some scholars who restrict it to early Christian expressions of hostility towards the Jews (Schäfer 1998:7). Because of differences in religious beliefs and cultural traditions, the emphasis of the ancient world on 'anti-Semitism' also varies. Nevertheless, whatever term is used, the definition of this attitude is based on the belief that Jews are uniquely inferior, evil, or deserving of condemnation by their very nature or according to historical or supernatural dictates (Feldman 1993:86). Therefore, in the ancient world, 'anti-Semitism' refers to hatred towards Jews. To avoid ambiguity, the term 'anti-Semitism', which has modern overtones, is not used in this article, but rather 'anti-Semitic thought'.

1. Related research: Gruen (2016); Ryssen (2008); Daniel (1979); Ben Zeev (1993); Gager (1983); Jaeger (1938); Feldman and Reinhold (1996); Feldman (1998); Gruen (1998); Feldman (1988); and Raspe (1998).

Note: Historical Thought and Source Interpretation.

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Anti-Semitic thought in the ancient world has been well-discussed by scholars. They have begun to focus on the works of early Ptolemaic Egyptian writers such as Manetho, Hecataeus of Abdera, and Lysimachus of Alexandria. These writers have rewritten the narration of Exodus, which is quite different from *the Book of Exodus*. For most scholars, the texts of Ptolemaic Egyptian writers were responses to *the Book of Exodus*. However, Schäfer expressed a different view. He believed that these texts already existed before Ptolemaic Egyptian writers (Schäfer 1998:164–167). Therefore, the key to solving this problem lies in the following three points: when or in what form was the Greek version of *the Bible* introduced into Egypt? How did the Ptolemaic Egyptian writers counterattack? What impacts did these works have on future writers? These issues will be discussed in this article.

Anti-Semitic thought and defense of early Ptolemaic Egyptian writers

Hervé Ryssen investigated the works of several Ptolemaic Egyptian writers who lived from the 3rd century BC to the 2nd century BC, including Manetho (about 4th – 3rd century BC), Hecataeus of Abdera about 4th century BC, and Lysimachus of Alexandria (about 4th – 3rd century BC). These writers, without exception, were distorting Jews and their customs in their works (Ryssen 2008:14). According to the historical materials, although Manasses of Patara denigrated the religious belief of Jews, he believed that Jews worshipped the golden donkey head (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 2.112–114). However, the vast majority of Egyptian writers' rewriting of Jewish history focused mostly on the narrative of Exodus, which constituted the main feature of anti-Semitic thought in this period. Their texts are replete with negative assessments of Jewish practices. Hecataeus is the most representative writer, declaring Jewish customs to be 'anti-human and unsocial'. There is a high degree of similarity with Tacitus' attitude towards the Jews. The attitude of later Roman historians to the origins of the Jews can be traced back to this period.

The most important question is, where did these three writers' anti-Semitic thoughts come from? Scholars attempted to discuss the thought origin of Ptolemaic Egyptian texts from the perspective of Greek tradition (Gager 1983:39). However, Greek writers had limited records of Jews. In contemporary Greek works, except for Agatharchides of Cnidus who believed that Jewish customs (Sabbath) were foolish, no other instances of vilifying Jews are found. Greek writers did not have much knowledge of Jews. The best example is Theophrastus, a Greek writer of the same era as Hecataeus. One of his texts mentions Jews and was regarded by most scholars as a record and evaluation of Jewish customs (Laqueur 2006:40; Stern 1979:8–10). However, as Gmirkin noticed, the Jewish customs recorded by Theophrastus are completely different from what we know. He argued that the Greek writer was only describing Syrian Jews who practiced 'heretical customs' (Gmirkin 2006:36–37). According to

Theophrastus, even though he classified Jews as a Syrian ethnic group, what he recorded was mainly Syrian customs, not Jewish customs. At the most, Theophrastus may have heard something about the Jews, orally or from letters of veterans of Alexander's campaigns, tourists, and sailors who had travelled about in the Orient, or from the Greeks who had visited Egypt during the governorship of Ptolemy, son of Lagos (Bar-Kochva 2010:17). Therefore, the Greek writer, who had never been to the Near East, only had a vague and general understanding of the ethnic groups and culture in this region. Except for Theophrastus, ancient Greek writers such as Herodotus, Aristotle, and Hieronymus of Cardia did not mention Jews.

Therefore, anti-Semitic thought was not prevalent in Greek cultural areas outside of Egypt. In other words, the thought of the Ptolemaic Egyptian writers did not originate from the Greek tradition. According to historical materials, it is more likely that this anti-Semitic thought originated from the Egyptian tradition. Historically, there was a long-standing conflict between the Egyptians and the Jews. Their hatred of the Jews is self-evident.

According to archaeological sources, the Merneptah Stele records the Egyptian conquest of the Jews in the 13th century BC (Yurco 1997:31). From then on, the Jews appeared in Egyptian literature as rebels and vanquished. The papyrus documents found at Elephantine indicate that a Jewish community had been established in the area before 525 BC. Despite trade and intermarriage between Egyptians and Jews, conflicts continued. At this time, Egypt was under the rule of the Persian Empire, and a large number of Jews became mercenaries to help the Persian Empire suppress the Egyptian revolt (Yuan 2011:7). Thus, the Jews were also ostracised by the Egyptians (Cook 1915:377–378). In addition to political factors, Jews clashed with Egyptians over their religious practices. Rams were often sacrificed by the Jews, but the image of Khnum, the chief god of Elephant Island, was a ram (Yuan 2011:14). Finally, in 410 BC, the Jews of Elephant Island clashed violently with the Egyptians. During this conflict, the Jewish temple was destroyed. This event was symbolic because it reflected the antipathy of the Egyptians towards Jews. The Egyptians hated the Jews (Feldman 1998:125). And it was also influenced by anti-Semitic thought (Laqueur 2006:39–40).

It is generally believed that the three Ptolemaic Egyptian writers referred to Egyptian sources and possibly also incorporated the oral traditions of the Egyptian priests. Of the three writers, Herodotus was the most knowledgeable about Jewish tradition (Gmirkin 2006:210–214; Gruen 1998:101). Jaeger argued that Theophrastus acquired his knowledge of Cain, Abel, and Isaac from Herodotus (Jaeger 1938:40). At the same time, Hecataeus had some knowledge of Jewish law, so much so that some scholars believed his work was forged by Jews (Ben Zeev 1993:219–224). Among these scholars, Gmirkin's viewpoint is the most representative. He listed four reasons, the most central of which is whether

Hecataeus had access to the Greek version of *the Book of Exodus* (Gmirkin 2006:39–40). He did not believe that Hecataeus had access to this Jewish work. Feldman held the opposite opinion, believing that these writers used the Septuagint as their primary material (Feldman 1998:123–127). The key to the problem, therefore, is whether the Ptolemaic Egyptian writers had access to the Greek version of *the Book of Exodus*.

The principal wave of Jewish re-entry into Egypt appears to have come at the end of the Persian period and in the early years of the Hellenistic age. The Exodus story could have seeped into Egyptian consciousness in the course of this era, thus to stir reaction and response (Gruen 1998:93). This view is also confirmed by the Letters of Aristeas. At the end of the 4th century BC, Ptolemy I (Ptolemy Lagos) captured 100 000 Jews into Egypt. Although this figure was questioned by Gambetti, the event itself still had a high degree of veracity (Gambetti 2009:42). In the early 3rd century BC, under the auspices of Ptolemy II, the Hebrew Bible began to be translated into Greek. Before that time, there had likely been non-standard Greek translations for use by Jews in Egypt. Thus, the story of the expulsion of the Jews from Egypt was already widespread in the 3rd century BC (Ben Zeev 1993:23). This shows that Hecataeus had the possibility of knowing the narrative of Exodus. Even so, there are certain errors in Hecataeus' description of this story. In his work, Moses built the Jewish Temple. This episode does not exist in *the Book of Exodus*. According to Jewish tradition, the Temple was built by King Solomon. There are two possibilities for this error: firstly, Hecataeus did not read *the Book of Exodus* and wrote his work based on oral materials or unofficial textual materials (irregular translations, etc.) (Momigliano 1971:41); Secondly, Hecataeus had seen *the Book of Exodus*, but had not seen *the Book of Kings*. He knew that the Jews had a temple, Therefore, he simply believed that this temple was built by Moses. Regardless of which possibility is correct, it indicates that Hecataeus had a vague understanding of Exodus and Jewish traditions.

In *the Book of Exodus*, the Egyptians were the persecutors of the Jews. So much so that 'the lamentations of the Israelites reached the ears of God, and God saw how the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites' (*the Book of Exodus*, 3. 9). As a response, God sent 10 plagues throughout the land of Egypt and directed Moses to lead the Jews out of Egypt to the 'Promised Land'. The stubbornness and wickedness of Pharaoh, the brutality of the Egyptians, and the greatness of Moses were echoed. In this process, the narrative of 'the other' plays an important role in the construction of early Jewish identity (Ma 2019:134–141). The authors of the Torah revealed through the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, and even Moses that the essence of Egyptian life was the path of slavery and that leaving Egypt was another path to God's righteousness. Egypt in the Torah is a symbol of a way of life different from the way of Israel, arrogant, brutal, and full of arbitrariness, while Moses represents the right way of righteousness, godliness, and increasing strength (Chen 2018:318–334).

Would Ptolemaic Egyptian writers respond to such a narrative? On this question, Gruen argued that those Greek intellectuals in Egypt who happened to know the story certainly did not feel the urge to refute it (Gruen 1998:98). However, this view brings up two other questions. Firstly, how do we understand the similarity between the texts of the Ptolemaic Egyptian writers and the narrative of Exodus? Gruen's view had some validity. He not only emphasised the Egyptian heritage of the three writers but also argued that it was the Jews who inserted their own creations into Egyptian mythology (Gruen 1998:113). This statement would explain the textual similarities and is somewhat convincing. Secondly, why did the Ptolemaic Egyptian writers have little to say about the rest of Jewish history? According to previous discussions, the narrative of Exodus had already seeped into the Egyptian consciousness in the early Hellenistic period. In other words, around the 3rd century BC, the narrative of Exodus was already widespread. With this background, faced with Jewish accusations of Egyptian sinful behaviours, the Ptolemaic Egyptian writers responded to the story, using Egyptian tradition as a base, which explains the similarity of the three writers' texts to the narrative of Exodus.

Schäfer challenged this point. He argued that:

On the contrary, Egyptian knowledge of the Passover ritual is already apparent in the Elephantine papyri. But then we cannot use the Septuagint version of the Exodus as the trigger and terminus a quo of Manetho's expulsion story; the story need not have been fabricated by Manetho but may be much earlier, as early at least as any knowledge of the Exodus can be supposed. (Schäfer 1998:164)

This view presupposes the possibility that the Egyptians knew about the narrative of Exodus before the 4th century BC. However, we do not have enough evidence to support this view. Although Schäfer's research shows that Egyptian knowledge of the Passover ritual is already apparent in the Elephantine papyri. This evidence still does not prove that the Egyptians knew the narrative of Exodus. When the Greek version of the narrative of Exodus was introduced to Egypt, works with anti-Semitic thought emerged, and no earlier works were found. So it is hard to say that this is a historical coincidence. There is a connection between the introduction of the Greek version of the Exodus narrative to Egypt and the works of Ptolemaic Egyptian writers.

Thus, the Ptolemaic Egyptian writers' distortion of the narrative of Exodus and the image of Moses was a major manifestation of their anti-Semitic thought. But this is essentially a response to and defense of the narrative of Exodus (Feldman 1996:398). The purpose of their writing was not to exclude Jews, nor did they intend to convey anti-Semitic thought. However, in the process of defense, the anti-Semitic sentiment of the Egyptian tradition inevitably came to expression in the rewritten narrative of Exodus. It can be argued that the anti-Semitic thoughts of the early Ptolemaic writers were 'unconscious' expressions in the creative process, essentially a by-product of the act of apologetics.

The rewriting of the narrative of Exodus

For apologetic purposes, early Ptolemaic Egyptian writers rewrote the narrative of Exodus. These writers include Manetho, Hecataeus of Abdera, and Lysimachus of Alexandria. They lived between the 4th and 2nd centuries BC and wrote a large number of related works. However, only a few fragments of their works have survived because of the time that has elapsed. The texts of Manetho are mainly preserved in Josephus' *Against Apion*, and scholars are still debating about the authenticity of these texts (Feldman 1988:188–189, note. 2). In fact, Josephus' *Against Apion* has the nature of a defense of Judaism. From this perspective, the texts quoted in his work should have a high degree of authenticity, otherwise, it would be counterproductive. At the same time, Josephus lived in an era of literary contempt for the Roman Empire, and in such a background it would have been difficult for a writer who distorted historical facts to escape the criticism of his rivals (Lv 2015:55). No accusations of distortion of Josephus' account are to be found in the works of contemporaneous historians. Thus, there is no deliberate distortion of the facts in his texts, but rather a relatively accurate representation of the author's willingness (Ben Zeev 1993:215–234; Lv 2015:55). In *Against Apion*, Josephus recounted two stories recorded by Manetho. Although the first story may seem to have little to do with the narrative of Exodus, Josephus himself is convinced that both stories are about the narrative of Exodus. In other words, he believed that Manetho was telling the same story twice (Raspe 1998:132).

In the first story, Manetho described the Jews as 'shepherds' who conquered Egypt, the Egyptians as the oppressed, and the Jews as the tyrants. Under the leadership of King Misphragmouthis, these 'shepherds' were expelled from Egypt and arrived in a place called Judea, where they built a city called Jerusalem (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1. 75–101). Manetho completely transformed the moral and ethical relations of the narrative of Exodus. The Jews were not victims, but perpetrators of violence. He wrote:

A people of ignoble origin from the east, whose coming was unforeseen, had the audacity to invade the country, which they mastered by main force without difficulty or even a battle. Having overpowered the chiefs, they then savagely burnt the cities, razed the temples of gods to the ground, and treated the whole native population with the utmost cruelty, massacring some, and carrying off the wives and children of others into slavery. (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1. 75–77)

The cause of this disaster came from the Jews, who not only invaded Egypt, but also burned, killed, looted, and even forced children and women into slavery. These behaviours violated human moral standards. At the same time, Jews also adopted a policy of genocide against the Egyptians, and hope to 'extirpate the Egyptians' (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1. 81). In this situation, the Egyptians were compelled to rebel. Thus, in Manetho's narrative, the Jews themselves were sinful. The expulsion of them by the Egyptians was morally

just. In the process of expelling Jews, Egyptians fully demonstrated their kindness:

He concluded a treaty, under which they were all to evacuate Egypt and go whither they would unmolested. Upon these terms no fewer than two hundred and forty thousand, entire households with their possessions. Left Egypt and traversed the desert to Syria. (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1. 88–89)

In this story, Manetho nested the narrative of Exodus within the larger narrative of Egyptian history, that of the invasion, domination, and expulsion of the Hyksos. His narrative is grounded in Egyptian history itself. At the same time, he knew the narrative of Exodus and attempted to respond to it within the framework of Egyptian history. Thus, in Manetho's work, the first part is an account of the events of the Hyksos, while the second part is an exploitation of the narrative of Exodus. In the process of compiling a new story, the Hyksos and the Jews achieved a unity of identity. Manetho also presupposed Egyptian hatred of the Hyksos into the narrative of Exodus (Gardiner 1924:87–96; Malamat 1997:23–24; Schäfer 1998:18–21). Manetho's account completely reverses the roles and ethical and moral responsibilities of the two sides. His approach of embedding the narrative of Exodus into the framework of Egyptian history succeeds in shifting the moral responsibility onto the Jews for apologetic purposes.

In Manetho's second story, the Jews comprised lepers and invalids from all over Egypt. The Pharaoh threw them all into a quarry on the east bank of the Nile and made the city of Auaris, abandoned by shepherds, their shelter. When they entered this city, they appointed an Egyptian priest named Osarsiph as their leader. According to Manetho, this man was Moses. This chief then issued a series of decrees that went against Egyptian tradition:

By his first law he ordained that they should not worship the gods nor abstain from the flesh of any of the animals held in special reverence in Egypt, but should kill and consume them all. (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1. 238–239)

Through a series of measures, this group was completely separated from the Egyptians and became hostile to them in a religious field. Then they joined forces with the 'shepherds' and attacked Egypt. The Pharaoh fled in haste to Ethiopia, and these unclean people and shepherds committed barbaric crimes in Egypt:

Not only did they set cities and villages on fire, not only did they pillage the temples and mutilate the images of the gods, but, not content with that, they habitually used the very sanctuaries as kitchens for roasting the venerated sacred animals, and forced the priests and prophets to slaughter them and cut their throats, and then turned them out naked. (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1. 249–250)

This narrative bears some resemblance to the content of 2 *Maccabees*. During the time of Antiochus IV, Jews were forced to eat pork by governors sent by the king, and some Jews were martyred to keep their faith. This shows the perniciousness of such behaviour in an ancient society with a

widespread religious belief. In this story, Manetho likewise completely reversed the roles and moral responsibilities of both sides, placing the blame on the Jews. And then the expulsion of the Jews by the Egyptians is justified. In the second story, Manetho brought in the characters from the first story, and the 'shepherds' became a key part of it. Not only were they the protagonists of the first story but they also took part in the invasion of Egypt in the second story. In this narrative, the evil of the Jews was given a historical continuity. The fact that the Hyksos, who had committed so many atrocities in Egyptian history, and the unclean, who lacked religious piety, together formed the Jewish community, greatly strengthened the moral force of the Egyptians to expel the Jews.

Manetho's stories have a remarkable feature. He described the atrocities of Jews in detail and the process of 'exodus from Egypt' in a brief way. In other words, he stressed the reasons why Jews were expelled from Egypt, namely, the invasion of Egypt, atrocities, and religious impiety (Raspe 1998:134). This proves that Manetho's purpose is not only to record history but also to contain a response to the narrative of Exodus, especially the defense of Egyptian atrocities. This proves the legitimacy of the Egyptian expulsion of the Jews. Based on historical facts, he rewrote the narrative of Exodus. In this process, anti-Semitic thought were presented.

Hecataeus lived in the period of Alexander the Great and Ptolemy I. His works were lost, and some fragments are quoted by Diodorus. He associated the Jews with the plague in Egypt. The Jews practiced a different religion and rituals, which led to the gradual decline of traditional Egyptian rituals. Therefore, the only way to end the plague epidemic was to expel this group of this gentile. The most prominent and active group of these expelled people came ashore in Greece and some other places. The vast majority of the rest, led by Moses, went to uninhabited Judea. Here the Jews founded many cities, including Jerusalem. They also built the temple, established the law, and formed political institutions (Diodorus, 40. 3. 1-3). Hecataeus gave the Jews a religious dimension of sin, and they practiced a different religion and rituals that led to the gradual decline of traditional Egyptian rituals, which was the cause of the epidemic in Egypt. The expulsion of the Jews by the Egyptians was therefore justified both on the religious field and on the practical needs. Hecataeus referred to the 'most prominent and active' group of people who came ashore in Greece and some other places. This implies that the vast majority of the others, the Jews, at least, were not the most prominent group, which hardly adds to the glory of the Jews (Gruen 1998:100).

In contrast to Hecataeus' account, although Lysimachus also associated the Jews with the disease, he saw them as people suffering from leprosy, scabies, and other diseases who begged at the temple and were of low status. The Pharaoh, by divine command, banished them to the desert, and Moses was the leader of the group. Lysimachus further added that the Jews had a bad reputation when they arrived in Judea, mistreating the local inhabitants, and plundering and

burning the temple (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1. 305-311). Lysimachus was deliberately demeaning the Jews. People suffering from leprosy, scabies, and other diseases were considered religiously unclean, and in real life, this group was also a vulnerable group that people shunned. This group of people who suffered from disease also begged at the temple and were of low status. This was one of the religious and practical reasons for their expulsion from Egypt. Lysimachus emphasised that Pharaoh's actions were based on divine commands, in other words, Pharaoh's expulsion of Jews was a command of God. The expulsion of the Jews was morally justified, both from a religious perspective and from a practical necessity. Lysimachus further emphasised the burning and pillaging of the Jews in Canaan, highlighting their sinfulness. Moreover, he told his readers directly in the texts that the Jews had a bad reputation. Thus, these 'facts' once again justified the expulsion of the Jews.

On the whole, none of these writers expressed a strong anti-Semitic thought in a subjective sense. However, for apologetic purposes, in the religious field, they portrayed the Jews as unclean and ungodly people and emphasised their expulsion by divine guidance. In reality, they portrayed the Jews as lepers, lowly beggars, and invaders, and claimed that they were burning and pillaging the land of Canaan. These descriptions were objectively anti-Semitic thought and profoundly influenced the thinking of later writers.

Inheritance and expansion of later writers

The early Ptolemaic Egyptian writers' rewriting of the narrative of Exodus had a profound impact on the later period. Their works were recognised by the writers of the Roman era. The anti-Semitic thoughts contained therein were further amplified.

Pompeius Trogus, Tacitus, Diodorus, and other writers, inherited the narrative of the Exodus from early Ptolemaic Egyptian writers. According to Pompeius Trogus, some Egyptians were suffering from scabies and leprosy, and the other Egyptians were warned by an oracle to drive Moyses (the son of Joseph in the Bible) and the sick people out of Egypt so that the plague would not spread among more people. Moyses stole the sacred vessels of Egypt and drew the Egyptians after him. Later, because of a storm, they were able to escape. To prevent them from antagonising their neighbours for the same reason, they began to close themselves and gradually evolved into a system (Stern 1976:334-338). Pompey Trugus is closer to Hecataeus' account, based on which he further expanded the relevant information. Regarding the Egyptian chase and the coming of the storm, it is clear that the influence of the narrative of Exodus is present. He also offered further interpretations of the closed religious social system of the Jews. Tacitus pointed to his narrative as the view of most writers. He suggested that a great plague broke out in Egypt at the time, so the king purged the Jews from Egypt according to the oracle of Amun. Tacitus also stressed that this was because of the hatred of the

gods for the Jews. Moses then led the Jews out of the desert and expelled the native inhabitants of the area, building a city and a temple there (Tacitus, *Histories*, 5. 3). Tacitus drew on Hecataeus' account and even adopted the latter's erroneous account of the Temple. In addition to the narrative of Exodus, Posidonius and Apollonius inherited Manasses' account of the 'golden donkey head' (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 2.80–96). They intended to further prove the superstition and ignorance of the Jews.

On this basis, the connotation of anti-Semitic thought shifts from a response to and defense of the narrative of Exodus to an overall denigration of the Jews and their faith. Firstly, the succession and development of ἀπάνθρωπος and μισόξενος. According to Diodorus, Antiochus IV was so shocked by this hatred against all mankind that he set out to break with the traditional customs of the Jews (*Diodorus*, 34. 1. 1–5). Apollonius also accused the Jews of being 'atheists' and 'anti-humans [μισανθρώπους] (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 2. 148)' Philostratus, a writer who lived from the 2nd to the 3rd century AD, mentioned that the Jews were not only anti-Roman but also anti-human [παντων ἀνθρώπων] and kept their lives isolated from others (Stern 1980:430–432). The negative evaluation of Jews and Jewish customs also further affected the evaluation of early Christians by Roman writers. When Tacitus described Christians, he mentioned that they hated human beings (Odium humani generis) (Tacitus, *Annales*, 15. 44. 2–5). Stern is concerned about the connection between the charge and the texts of the Ptolemaic Egyptian writers 'ἀπάνθρωπος' and 'μισόξενος' (Stern 1980:93). Secondly, more materials that vilified the Jews were added to the composition. Democritus recorded a story about the use of human sacrifice by Jews (Stern 1976:431). This story was further expanded in Apion's account, where he emphasised that the Jews used Greek sacrifices, not just foreigners as Democritus said (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 2. 91–96). Apion's emphasis on Greek identity highlights the contrast between 'civilisation' and 'barbarism'. While human sacrifice was more common in the ancient world, it was considered a barbaric practice in the Greco-Roman world. This further reflects the fact that Jews were both superstitious and anti-human. Finally, more writers expressed their hatred of Jews directly, and most of the relevant texts were recorded by Josephus in the *Against Apion*. It is worth mentioning that this negative attitude reached its peak after the Jewish War. The most representative of them was Tacitus, who repeatedly stated directly that the Jews were vile and that Judaism was a superstition. He even glorified the religious persecution of Antiochus IV, declaring that the latter was intended to break Jewish superstition (Tacitus, *Histories*, 5. 8). In summary, Tacitus was portraying Jewish customs as the antithesis of civilised society (Goodman 2004:24). Arrian, who lived from the 1st to the 2nd century AD, mentioned that Trajan was determined, above all, if it were possible, to destroy the nation utterly, but if not, at least to crush it and stop its presumptuous wickedness (Stern 1980:152). It can be said that most of the writers of the Roman Empire era shared the same attitude towards the Jews.

Conclusion

With the influx of Jews in the 4th century BC, the narrative of Exodus gradually came to the attention of the early Ptolemaic Egyptian writers, in which the negative image of Egypt aroused their discontent. To achieve their defense, they rewrote the narrative of Exodus. In this process, rationalising the motives for the Egyptians' expulsion of the Jews was at the forefront of their rewriting of the narrative of Exodus. To achieve this, they adopt two literary treatments: firstly, to emphasise the religious impurity and impiety of the Jews. Secondly, to emphasise the Jews' atrocities in reality. By vilifying the Jews on religious-ethical and social-moral, the expulsion of the Jews is further justified and thus defended. In rewriting the narrative, the writers themselves did not express strong anti-Semitic tendencies on a subjective aspect, although they were influenced by indigenous Egyptian anti-Semitic thought. Even so, the vilification of Jews for defense objectively conveys anti-Semitic thought. From the works of later Roman historians, it can be seen that they adopted the early Ptolemaic Egyptian writers' narrative of Exodus, while also inheriting the anti-Semitic thought contained in it and further pushing it to the extreme.

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S.Z. declares that they are the sole author of this article.

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