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The Construction of the Figure of Moses According to Biblical and Extrabiblical Sources

Thomas C. RÖMER

University of Lausanne, Switzerland

I. Introduction: Moses between Egypt and the Promised Land

According to Sigmund Freud, Moses was a highborn Egyptian who was transformed by legend into a Jew. At the end of his life, Freud was so fascinated by Moses that he wrote several essays in which he attempted to show that the Hebrews were unable to accept the religious reforms from Moses, the Egyptian, and therefore murdered him. They replaced him with a “second Moses” who ratified the traditional Hebrew conception in presenting Yahweh as a warrior god¹. The idea that Moses was an Egyptian² is still very popular nowadays and books presenting Moses as a disciple of the “monotheistic” Egyptian king Akhenaten or even as the Pharaoh himself are likely to sell very well. But in more serious attempts to discover the “historical Moses”, he also sometimes appears as an Egyptian³. The idea that Moses was an Egyptian is not an inven-

1 See esp. Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (Random House Paperbacks, 1967 [1939]).

2 See on the history of this idea Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1998).

3 Recently, a German Egyptologist tried to show that the figure of Moses was inspired by a Pharaoh, not Akhenaton, but Amon-Masesa, living at the end of the 13th cen-

tion from modern authors; it is, as we will see, quite well attested since the 4th or 3rd century B.C. In the Hebrew Bible itself, Moses has a double identity; he is the biological son of a Levite woman (the story in Exod. 2 is silent about his father), and he is Egyptian by adoption. According to the Bible, Moses gives up his Egyptian identity. The whole story of the Exodus and the quest for the Promised Land is also a story of separation from Egypt. There is no need to insist on the fact that, besides Yahweh, Moses is the most important figure of the Torah, which may be understood, as R. Knierim has shown, as a “biography of Moses”⁴. The Pentateuch ends with the death of Moses, who is explicitly presented as to outweigh all the other heroes or prophets in Israel’s history.

In the following article I will try to present briefly a hypothesis about the formation of the Moses story; I shall first analyze the Pentateuchal material, and then the Moses tradition in often neglected extra-biblical sources from the Hellenistic period. I will also try to evaluate if and how these sources can help us to understand better how the figure of Moses was constructed in the Hebrew Bible.

II. The Formation of the Moses-Story: an Analysis of the Biblical Material

1. The Literary Origins of the Moses Story During the Assyrian Period

If one looks at Moses in the Hebrew Bible outside the Pentateuch it appears that he is often quoted in the Deuteronomistic History (especially in Joshua and Kings), as well as in Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah⁵. On the con-

ture, cf. Rolf Krauss. *Das Moses-Rätsel. Auf den Spuren einer biblischen Erfindung* (München: Ullstein Verlag, 2001).

4 Rolf P. Knierim, “The Composition of the Pentateuch”, in *SBL Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 393-415.

5 Ten times in Ezra-Nehemiah, 21 times in Chronicles (much more often as in Kings

trary, only four prophetic texts and six Psalms mention his name⁶. This seems to indicate Moses’ alignment with the Deuteronomistic School, which may well have invented the biography of Moses.

There is no doubt that the original story of Moses’ birth and exposition reflects literary dependence on the birth legend of Sargon, the legendary founder of the Assyrian Empire:

Sargon, strong king, king of Agade, am I. My mother was a high priestess, my father I do not know ... My mother, a high priestess, conceived me, in secret she bore me. She placed me in a reed basket, with bitumen she caulked my hatch. She abandoned me to the river from which I could not escape. The river carried me along: to Aqqi, the water drawer, it brought me. Aqqi, the water drawer, when immersing his bucket lifted me up. Aqqi, the water drawer, raised me as his adopted son. Aqqi, the water drawer, set me to his garden work. During my garden work, Istar loved me (so that) 55 years I ruled as king.⁷

In its original form, in which Moses’ sister was most likely absent, the text of Exodus 2 was very close to this legend. Sargon and Moses are exposed (for obscure reasons) by their mothers (their fathers do not intervene); they are set out in a basket on a River, found, and adopted; the adoption refers in both cases to a royal context. Even if the Sargon story is supposed to refer to the third millennium king, it was written under Sargon II, at the end of the 8th century⁸. That

where he is mentioned ten times).

6 Isah. 63.11; Jer. 15.1; Mi. 6.4; Mal. 3.22; Ps 77.21; 90.1; 99.6-7; 105.25; 106.16.23.32-33. All these Psalms have a post-exilic setting.

7 Quoted according to the translation of Brian Lewis, *The Sargon Legend. A Study of the Akkadian Text of the Tale and the Tale of the Hero who was Exposed at Birth* (ASOR Diss. Ser 4; Cambridge, Ma.: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

8 Lewis, 98-110. He has shown the Neo-Assyrian orthographic forms and the idiomatic expressions only attested in this period.

means that Moses' story cannot be older, and confirms a dating at some point in the 7th century. Exod. 2 does not presuppose any knowledge about Moses, his origins and his name; everything is explained. It is tempting then to understand the first written story about Moses (which cannot be reconstructed in detail) as a reaction to Neo-Assyrian royal ideology, elaborated at Josiah's court. Assyrian influence also manifests itself through the Akkadian terms employed to describe Israel's bondage in Exod. 1.11, as well in some of the plagues, which themselves may be literary adaptations excerpted from Assyrian vassalage treaties⁹. The miraculous intervention of Yahweh against the Egyptian army is also a very common motif in Near Eastern military propaganda. It is difficult to determine where this first story of Moses ended. Was it with the defeat of Pharaoh's army, or with the conclusion of a treaty and the gift of a Law, as Otto suggests¹⁰? Or did the first Moses story also contain conquest traditions? We will return to this question later. What we can say at this point of our investigation is that the 7th century Moses story was conceived with Assyrian material in an anti-Assyrian perspective¹¹. Moses the adopted Egyptian who revolts against Egyptian su-

9 For Exod. 1 compare *ms* to Accadian *massu*, and *'ry msknt* to Accadian *maskantu*, cf. Christoph Uehlinger, *Weltreich und «eine Rede»*. Eine neue Deutung der sogenannten Turmbauerzählung (Gen 11,1-9) (OBO 101; Freiburg [CH]/Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 250-1 and 260. For the plagues see John Van Seters, «The Plagues of Egypt: Ancient Tradition or Literary Invention?», *ZAW* 98 (1986), 31-9. Cf. also Thomas Römer, «Transformations et influences dans «l'historiographie» juive de la fin du VIIe s. av. notre ère jusqu'à l'époque perse», *Trans* 13 (1997), 47-63.

10 Eckart Otto, «Mose und das Gesetz. Die Mose-Figur als Gegenentwurf Politischer Theologie zur neuassyrischen Königsideologie im 7. Jh. v. Chr.», in *Mose. Ägypten und das Alte Testament* (ed. E. Otto; SBS 189; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2000), 42-83.

11 If we look at the end of Josiah one may also ask if the Exodus story does also promote a revolt against the Egyptian king of whom Josiah depended during the last years of his reign.

premacy might well reflect the Judean king who tries to escape from his Assyrian "protector". In this story, Moses is a figure of rupture and separation.

2. Two Different Figures of Moses in the Persian Edition of the Pentateuch

Most scholars agree nowadays that it was during the Persian period that most of the Pentateuchal material was elaborated and edited (not necessarily invented). We cannot go here into the details of the current debate about the formation of the Pentateuch¹². However, in the present state of discussion it seems quite clear (following scholars such as Blum, Carr and others¹³) that one should distinguish two main actors who were involved in the publication of the Torah, even if this theory is too simple and needs some modification. This would be especially true with respect to the books of Genesis and Numbers. Nevertheless, the Pentateuch clearly manifests the intervention of priestly authors and redactors, and there is no doubt about the existence of a "priestly work". On the other hand, there is evidence for a lay scribal milieu, which some authors still designate as the "Yahwist", while others speak of a D-composition¹⁴. Both groups, priestly and Deuteronomistic influenced lay scribes, wrote down competing ac-

12 On this cf. Thomas Römer, «Le Pentateuque toujours en question: bilan et perspectives après un quart de siècle de débat», in *Congress Volume Basel 2001* (ed. A. Le-maire; VT.S 92; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2002), 343-74.

13 Erhard Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW 189; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1990); David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster-John Knox Press, 1996); Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch. An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (ABRL; New York et al.: Doubleday, 1992).

14 For the "Yahwist" see John Van Seters, *The Pentateuch. A Social Science Commentary* (Trajectories; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); C. Levin, *Der Jahwist* (FRLANT 157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), for the "D-composition" Blum and Carr.

counts of Israel's origins before they were constrained to put them together and to find a compromise in order to create a single Torah that served as the new pattern of identity for the emerging Judaism. The figure of Moses represented a major cohesive factor that enabled the different redactors of the Pentateuch to produce a common edition of Israel's Torah. Nevertheless, at the beginning, Deuteronomists and Priests elaborated quite different traditions on Moses. The exilic and Golah-oriented Deuteronomists picked up the *vita Mosis* from their forerunners at the court of Jerusalem. According to the exilic edition of Deuteronomy, Moses is first and foremost Israel's teacher and lawgiver. He constantly reminds his audience that they or "their fathers" were slaves in Egypt and that Yahweh delivered them from Pharaoh with signs, wonders and a mighty hand. Moses is the mediator of the treaty between Yahweh and Israel as well as of the whole of Israel's law. This law, moreover, provides a new identity for the people who become Yahweh's personal property (Deut. 7.6). However, these Deuteronomistic redactors also portray Moses as the one who ordained the conquest and insisted on strict separation from "the people of the land", and even on their annihilation. According to Ex. 23,31-32, Moses must communicate the following to his people: "I will hand over to you the inhabitants of the land, and you shall drive them out before you. You shall make no covenant with them and their gods. They shall not live in your land, or they will make you sin against me". We find the same ideology in Deuteronomy (7.1-6; 9.1-6, 20.16-18), where Moses advocates, according to Pakkala, an "intolerant monolatry"¹⁵ as well as the idea that the promise of the land would be fulfilled by war.

The members of the priestly school were probably familiar with the Deuteronomistic Moses tradition. They agreed upon the importance of Moses, but nevertheless supplemented the Exodus tradition by introducing the patriarchal

15 Juha Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry in the Deuteronomistic History* (Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 76; Helsinki/Göttingen: Finnish Exegetical Society/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

narratives as the first part of Israel's history¹⁶. Recently several scholars have argued the case that "P" was the first to link the Patriarchal and the Moses tradition¹⁷. While this position remains disputed it becomes quite clear that, as David Carr has stated, that "the main-literary-critical division in the pre-P Pentateuchal materials ... may be between the Moses story and its backwards extension through the composition of an early form of Genesis"¹⁸. If we view the Patriarchal narratives, and especially the Abraham story, as prologue to the Exodus tradition, this would mean that the Priestly writers are endeavoring to counterbalance the Deuteronomistic emphasis on separation and war, since the priestly account of Abraham presents him as an "ecumenical ancestor" (A. de Pury)¹⁹ who gives birth to numerous peoples. In addition, the priestly account of the Moses tradition also differs considerably from the non-priestly traditions. The classical example is Exod. 14, where the non-priestly documents present the delivery at the Sea as Yahweh's and Moses' war against Pharaoh and his army, whereas the Priestly account presents the event as parallel to the creation story in Gn 1. This then presents a more symbolical portrait of the crossing of the Sea, the latter appearing now, in a sense, as the "creation story" of Israel. Moreover, while describing Moses' activities in Egypt prior to Israel's deliverance at the Sea of Reeds, the Priestly writers introduce elements quite different

16 See already Norbert Lohfink, "Die priesterschriftliche Abwertung der Tradition von der Offenbarung des Jahwenamens an Mose", *Bib.* 49 (1968), 1-8.

17 See especially Konrad Schmid, *Erzväter und Exodus. Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments* (WMANT 81; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1999).

18 David M. Carr, "Genesis in Relation to the Moses Story. Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives", in *Studies in the Book of Genesis. Literature, Redaction and History* (ed. A. Wénin; BETL 155; Leuven: University Press - Peeters, 2001), 273-95: 294.

19 Albert de Pury, "Abraham: The Priestly Writer's "Ecumenical" Ancestor", in *Rethinking the Foundations. Historiography in the Ancient World and in the Bible. Essays in Honour of John Van Seters* (ed. S.L. McKenzie/T. Römer; BZAW 294; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2000), 163-81.

from those characteristic of the Deuteronomistic presentation. For the latter, Moses acts in the so-called plague stories as a prophet of doom for Egypt, and the plagues appear as judgment on a stubborn Pharaoh. "P" is not as keen on judgment and destruction, but rather presents Moses and Aaron more as magicians. In the Priestly account of Exod. 7-10, Moses uses the same methods as do the Egyptian priests and magicians. And the first miracle of Moses in Exod. 7.8-13 may be compared to the same type of magic described in an Egyptian papyrus (Papyrus Westcar). This may evidence P's appreciation of Egyptian culture. Of course, the Priestly account of Exod. 7-10²⁰ makes clear that Moses, as Yahweh's representative, acts in a way which surpasses the know-how and the power of Egypt. But in contrast to the Deuteronomistic school, P does not promote separation, but rather Moses' and Israel's involvement in the midst of the nations.

Summing up this section: the figure of Moses represents a major factor in providing coherence within the Torah. However, given the coalescence of Priestly and non-priestly accounts about Moses in the Pentateuch, this "coherence" remains decidedly diverse. Still, one question remains: whence came the Priestly and the Deuteronomistic writers' different traditions about Moses? Did they make everything up? I have argued that the written edition of the biblical Moses story adapted material from Assyrian documents²⁰. The question bearing upon the existence of specific traditions on Moses, however, eludes more difficult to answer. Nevertheless, one may at least speculate about the possibility that some of these traditions could be reflected in extra-biblical writings from the Hellenistic period.

20 For the Priestly plague-story Reindl has argued that P took over a popular story from the Egyptian Jewish Diaspora, cf. J. Reindl, «Der Finger Gottes und die Macht der Götter. Ein Problem des ägyptischen Diasporajudentums und sein literarischer Niederschlag», in *Dienst der Vermittlung. Festschrift Priesterseminar Erfurt* (ed. W. Ernst: Erfurter Theologische Studien 37; Leipzig: 1977), 49-60.

III. Extra-biblical Stories about Moses from Hellenistic Times

1. Some Methodological Remarks

As long as Pentateuchal research relied on the traditional documentary hypothesis according to which the Yahwistic document dated to the beginnings of the Israelite monarchy there was no doubt as to the traditions about Moses: they had to be very old, stemming from pre-monarchical times. From such a perspective, the stories about Moses related by Jewish and non-Jewish writers from the 4th, 3rd or 2nd centuries B.C. were nothing else than late *midrashim* and inventions²¹.

In the present state of the debate, a considerable number of texts in the Torah now appear to belong to the Persian period. This scholarly development makes the extra-biblical accounts about Moses almost contemporaneous with the publication of the Torah. If this is correct, it implies that, theoretically, these extra-biblical accounts may actually contain traditions that may well be as old as those which became part of the "official" story of Moses found in the Hebrew Bible²². It is no wonder, then, that authors such as Hecataeus of Abdera, Manetho, Artapanus, Lysimakhos of Alexandria and others are now enjoying somewhat of a come-back in biblical scholarship. It is certainly very interesting to look at these testimonies, though we should also beware of exaggerated enthusiasm. We know all these authors only through fragments kept by much later

21 An exception is Samuel E. Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition* (trans. Baruch Schwarz; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992) who, already in 1968, insisted on the importance of the extra-biblical sources for the understanding of the Exodus-tradition.

22 Philip R. Davies, "Judeans in Egypt: Hebrew and Greek Stories", in *Did Moses Speak Attic? Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period* (ed. L. L. Grabbe; JSOT.S 317; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 108-28.

authors (For instance, Manetho's original *History of Egypt* from the 3rd century B.C. was altered several times by pro- and anti-Jewish editors before he came to be known to Josephus, 1st century C.E, and Eusebius, 4th century C.E.²³), and we cannot be sure that all these quotations are actually original (especially when they appear in a polemical context). Nevertheless, we do well to have a closer look at these texts. In what follows, I will attempt to give some examples of their relevance for Pentateuchal research.

2. Hecataeus of Abdera and Manetho

Writing at the end of the 4th century B.C., Hecataeus of Abdera seems to be the first pagan author to refer to Moses. According to a fragment of his work *On the Egyptians*, preserved by Diodorus Siculus who in turn is quoted by Photius, Hecataeus gave the following account of Moses and the origins of the Jews. Once a disease struck the land of Egypt, which was interpreted as divine punishment; in order to pacify the gods, the Egyptians decided to expel all the foreigners living in the country. This event leads, according to Hecataeus, to the foundation of Judah and Jerusalem:

...the aliens were driven from the country, and the most outstanding and active among them banded together and, as some say, were cast ashore in Greece ... But the greater number were driven into what is now Judaea, which is not far distant from Egypt and was at that time utterly inhabited. The colony was headed by a man called Moses, outstanding both for his wisdom and for his courage. On taking possession of the land he founded, besides other cities, one that is now the most renowned of all, called Jerusalem.²⁴

23 Gerald P. Verbrugge and John M. Wickersham, *Berosos and Manetho Introduced and Translated. Native Traditions in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt*, (Ann Arbor, Mi: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 108-28.

24 For translation and notes see Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and*

Hecataeus then tells us that Moses organized the people in 12 tribes, gave them all the laws, and instituted a worship without any images. After he had established the ritual and sacrificial prescriptions, he appointed the wisest men to be simultaneously priests and judges. According to him, "the Jews never have a king, and authority is regularly vested in whichever priest is regarded superior to his colleagues in wisdom and virtue". The priests were, according to Hecataeus, allotted with portions of land that Moses annexed from neighboring tribes.

Whence came Hecataeus' knowledge about Moses? He hardly had a Torah at his disposal. Some of his statements accord with Pentateuchal traditions (Israel in Egypt, the twelve tribes, Moses as lawgiver, aniconism, *etcetera*), but some details also differ from the story known from the Torah. To be sure, the settlement of Israel under the guidance of Moses imitates the Greek foundations of colonies. In spite of this, it is nevertheless almost certain that Hecataeus had contacts with Jews who gave him some detailed information on Moses and the origins of Israel²⁵, some of which may have been competing with the biblical traditions. The information about diseases in Egypt, which is found also in Manetho and later authors, may be compared to the plague-stories in the Bible. The latter could be understood as a theological development from a more general account of illnesses that arouse in Egypt during the time that Israel dwelt there. A text such as Deut. 7.15: "all the dread diseases from Egypt that you experienced he (Yahweh) will not inflict on you" (see also Deut. 28.60) might reflect such a tradition.

Hecataeus' insistence on an Israel governed by priests could be explained by the social reality present among the Judaisms of the Persian and Hellenistic

Judaism, Vol. I. (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1974), 26-35.

25 Doron Mendels, "Hecataeus of Abdera and a Jewish patrios politeia of the Persian Period (Diodorus Siculus XL.3)", *ZAW* 95 (1983), 95-110.

periods, but how then are we to understand the assertion that the Jews never had a king? Does this mean that Hecataeus was unaware of the History of the Israelite and Judahite kingdoms as related in the books of Samuel and Kings²⁶? Or was he influenced by Jewish priests who opposed royalist and messianic ideology and made Moses out to be the founder of Jerusalem and the temple²⁷? It is also interesting that Hecataeus does not mention the military conquest of the land, or Joshua for that matter. The land to which Moses brings the Jews is an empty land. This tradition contradicts the Deuteronomistic view as expressed in Deut. and Josh. but concurs with the more Priestly ideology (as for instance in Exod. 6.8; Lev. 18.24-30; 20.22-26; Ezek. 20).

This observation fits quite well with another of Hecataeus' assertions where he comments on the laws of the Jews: "At the end of their laws there is even appended the statement. 'These are the words that Moses heard from God and declares to the Jews'". This could be a free quotation from the end of the book of Leviticus (Lev. 27.34: "These are the commandments that the Lord gave to Moses for the people of Israel on Mount Sinai")²⁸. If this were the case, one could argue that Hecataeus or his Jewish sources knew about the existence of a more priestly oriented "Triateuch" that lacked the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy. In fact, the assertion that Moses allotted land to the priests stands in contrast to laws found in Numbers and Deuteronomy (Numb. 18.24; Deut. 10.9:

26 That is the thesis of Ph. Davies, p. 120.

27 As argued by Mendels. The same idea is also attested by Lysimakhos of Alexandria who might depend on Hecataeus.

28 Following Théodore Reinach, *Textes d'auteurs grecs et romains relatifs au judaïsme*, Paris 1895, p. 18, n.2. According to Lester L. Grabbe, "Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period", in *Did Moses Speak Attic? Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period* (ed. L. L. Grabbe; JSOT.S 317; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001). 129-55, 132 it could be also an allusion to the end of Numbers. One may also think of Deut. 1.1, but in that case this verse would have been originally the conclusion of Leviticus or Numbers.

12.12, 18.1)²⁹. Even if it is impossible to reconstruct more precisely Hecataeus' sources, we can reasonably conclude that he presents traditions about Moses that resemble Priestly interests much more so than Deuteronomistic ideology³⁰.

It has often been said that the Egyptian priest Manetho, who writes in Greek, reflects dependence upon Hecataeus. In a fragment of his *History of Egypt* quoted by Josephus (*Against Apion*), we find a quite strange story about the Exodus of the Jews. Josephus, who is not very happy with this account, blames Manetho for depending on "anonymous (oral) myths". According to Josephus, Manetho knew a story of an Egyptian king Amenophis who wanted to purify Egypt from all lepers and sick people. He put them to work in stone-quarries, east of the Nile; he later transferred them to the city of Avaris, the former capital of the Hyksos ("the Shepherds"). A Priest named Osarseph headed the colony there. Osarseph gave them new laws³¹ (239: "they should not worship the gods or show reverence for any of the animals regarded as sacred by the Egyptians ... They should sacrifice and use all of them, and they should have nothing to do with any person except those who shared the oath"). He allies with the Shepherds from Jerusalem and together they fight against the Egyptian king who has to flee to Ethiopia where he stays for 13 years. Meanwhile, the lepers and the Shepherds burn cities, sanctuaries and destroy the statues of the gods. Finally, they are defeated by Amenophis and his army, who "killed many and pursued the rest as far as the borders of Syria". At the end of the story we are told: "250: It is said that the man who gave them their constitution and laws was a priest of the people of Heliopolis, named Osarseph³² from

29 Grabbe, p. 132.

30 Nevertheless there is also some insistence on Moses as a general: "He led out military expeditions against the neighboring tribes, and after annexing much land apportioned it out, assigning equal allotments to private citizens and greater ones to priests".

31 Translation according to Verbrugge and Wickersham.

32 According to Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: University Press, 1992), 415-6, Osarseph is a polemical name for Akhenaton;

Osiris the god of Heliopolis. When he changed his allegiance, he changed his name and was called Moses³³. There is some debate on the question of whether Manetho stands behind this identification, or whether it was added later³³. With or without this explicit identification, however, some features in the account may be linked with Moses and the exodus-tradition, especially perhaps the motifs of forced labor, of the lawgiver, and of the exclusive covenant. According to Manetho, and contrary to Pentateuchal tradition, Osarseph/Moses promulgated these laws in Egypt. It should be added, though, that the “historical summary” in Ezek. 20 also speaks of divine commandments that require the rejection of Egyptian idols that had already been given in the land of Egypt (v. 7). Does the author of this chapter rely on the same tradition as did Manetho? The insistence on oath, separation and war gives to Manetho’s account a somewhat “Deuteronomic” tone. The idea that Moses was an Egyptian can be understood either as anti-Jewish polemics, or as an element of historical memory, which may also be preserved in the biblical birth story of Moses.

3. Artapanus

What distinguishes Artapanus from his forerunners is that he was most likely a Jew. His name is of Persian origin and he possibly lived in the Egyptian Jewish Diaspora during the 2nd century B.C. While he may have known the Septuagintal Pentateuch as some argue,³⁴ Artapanus’ Moses account in his work entitled *Concerning the Jews* remains astonishing. Eusebius quotes three

others think of a combination of Joseph and Osiris.

33 See John G. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (SBL Monograph Series 16), Nashville - New York: Abingdon Press, 1972, pp. 113-118; Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 58-62.

34 For instance Carl R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors. Volume I: Historians* (Texts and Translations 20. Preudepigrapia Series 10; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 192.

important fragments that he found in his reading of Alexander Polyhistor. The most important of these fragments recounts the story of Moses almost in its entirety, from his birth to Israel’s sojourn in the wilderness. In Artapanus’ account, we find a quite curious combination of motifs. While dealing with the episode of Moses’ call, Artapanus adheres quite closely to Pentateuchal traditions. Prior to this episode, however, he uses a lot of material typical of the genre of popular romance literature³⁵ that makes Moses the founder of Egyptian and even of Greek civilization. Artapanus must have been a quite liberal Jew (some would say syncretistic), since he reports that Moses even initiated Egyptian religion that included the worship of sacred animals. His work should be understood, then, as an apology in response to Manetho, which he probably knew along with other critics of Judaism³⁶. For his non-biblical material, Artapanus certainly rests on traditions about Moses that stem from the Egyptian Diaspora that were already established traditions at the time he was writing. Let us turn briefly to his account³⁷. Moses is explicitly said to be a Jew adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter Merris (so-named because of her barrenness). When he grew up, he organized the Egyptian state and religion, set aside land for the priests (see the tradition reported by Hecataeus), and brought an anarchical situation to an end. “6: For these reasons Moses was loved by the masses, and being deemed worthy of divine honor”. The presentation of Moses as an almost divine figure is clearly attested in post-biblical Judaism, but late texts of the Torah seem already to be aware of the idea (Exod. 4.16; Deut. 34.10). The Pharaoh gets jealous of Moses, and in order to get rid of him sends him off to war to fight against the Ethiopians. But there Moses also becomes very popular and settles down for a while. This “Ethiopian-connection”, which is also attested in Flavius and the

35 Holladay, p. 190.

36 Carl R. Holladay, “Artapanus”. *ABD* 1 (1992), 461-3, p. 462.

37 The translation of the fragments found in Eusebius’ *Praeparatio* IX follows Holladay, *Fragments*.

Talmud, might be reflected in the astonishing note in Numb. 12.1, according to which Moses had married a Kushite woman. Where does this statement come from³⁸? It is quite reasonable to suppose that the author of Numb. 12 knew about some Ethiopian traditions connected to Moses. When Moses' mother dies, Pharaoh tries to kill him during the funeral, but, warned by his brother Aaron he escapes to Arabia where he marries the daughter of the chieftain Raguel. His father-in-law eagerly pursues a war against Egypt, but Moses fears for his people. After Pharaoh, who had been punished by God with elephantiasis, has died, Moses, during a prayer, sees a fire coming out of earth through which God instructs him "21: to wage war against Egypt, and as soon as he had rescued the Jews, to return them to their ancient fatherland". The confrontation between the new Pharaoh and Moses depicts the latter more as a magician³⁹ than as a prophet. The "signs" Moses performs that Artapanus narrates (transformation of the rod into a snake, transformation of the Nile, body sores, frogs, locusts and flees) belong to the Priestly source of the Bible. Even if Artapanus adds hail and earthquakes to these signs, he himself probably relies on a tradition very close to the P source⁴⁰. If we look now at how Artapanus reports on Israel's salvation

38 Some scholars argue that Numb. 12.1 does not refer to Kush but to a Madianite tribe Kushan. see for instance Eryl W. Davies, *Numbers* (NCBC; London/Grand Rapids: Marshall Pickering/Eerdmans, 1995), 118. But this does not resolve the question of the provenance of the extra-biblical Ethiopia-connection. Budd claims that Numb. 12.1 "is not likely to have been created for apologetic purposes of any kind" (Philip J. Budd, *Numbers* (WBC 5; Waco: Word, 1984), 136). Diebner thinks that this tradition may reflect links between the Jewish Diaspora in Elephantine with the surrounding people (Bernd J. Diebner, "...for he had married a Cushite woman" (Num 12,1)", *Nubica I/II* [1990], 499-504).

39 The presentation of Moses as a magician is quite well attested in extra-biblical literature, Gager, 134-61.

40 See, for instance, the study of Fujiko Kohata, *Jahwist und Priesterschrift in Exodus 3-14* (BZAW 166; Berlin - New York: de Gruyter, 1986), who attributes to P the following "plagues": the rod is changed into a dragon, the waters of the Nile are turned

at the Sea, we see further indication of his likely familiarity with two distinct traditions. "35: Now the Memphians claim that Moses, being familiar with the countryside, watched for the ebb tide, then let the multitude through the dry part of the sea. The Heliopolitans, on the other hand, claim that the king rushed down on them ... because the Jews were crossing the sea, having taken the possessions of the Egyptians. 36: The divine voice came to Moses instructing him to strike the sea with his rod and to divide it. When Moses heard this, he touched the water lightly with his rod and the stream divided, and the multitude passed through the dry channel." The last version closely resembles the biblical P-account, whereas the more "rationalist" explanation might be compared to the non-priestly story itself based on the idea of an ebb-tide⁴¹. The time in the wilderness receives only slight mention: "37: After the Jews had escaped the danger, they spent forty years in the desert. Meanwhile, God showered upon them meal similar in texture to rolled millet resembling the color of snow". This brief statement does not mention any conflict or revolt during the wilderness sojourn. The silence may be due to apologetic reasons, but one may also ask whether Artapanus is still aware of the original, more positive coloring of the wilderness traditions that Dozeman locates first in Hosea⁴². Given the fragmentary character of Artapanus' testimony, this must remain speculation. However, it is quite evident that as late as in Hellenistic times there was awareness of the diversity of the Moses and Exodus traditions.

into blood, frogs, gnats, festering boils. Artapanus mentions also hails and earthquakes. In Exod., hail is mentioned by "J" and the redactor, but not linked to earthquake.

41 Scholars agree that Exod. 14.21bα and 26b belong to "J" (or "D"), whereas verses 14.16.21bβ.22.26a are "P".

42 Thomas B. Dozeman, "Hosea and the Wilderness Wandering Tradition", in *Rethinking the Foundations. Historiography in the Ancient World and in the Bible. Essays in Honour of John Van Seters* (ed. S.L. McKenzie/T.Römer; BZAW 294; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2000), 55-70.

III. Some Concluding Remarks

To begin with I mentioned Freud's idea of two different Moses. Even if Freud's historical speculation is entirely fanciful, he probably had a correct intuition. As a matter of fact, the redactors of the Pentateuch combined two different figures of Moses: the Deuteronomistic Moses, a most warlike figure, who insists on separation from Egypt and all other nations, and the priestly Moses, a more syncretistic and, to some extent at least, pacific figure, who is also more integrative in regard to Egyptian civilization. Pagan and Jewish writers from the Hellenistic period were apparently still aware of this diversity. They also seem to know other traditions on Moses, which did not find their way into the Torah, or only in a very allusive way, as for instance Moses' Ethiopian connection, or the tradition about Egypt as a land of diseases. Apparently, there was also a tradition according to which it was Moses who led the Israelites into the Promised Land (and even founded Jerusalem). This may be explained by latter attempts to highlight Moses' feats for Israel. But one may also ask if there were traditions in which Moses was more involved in the conquest of the land as in the stories we have know in Numbers and Deuteronomy. Maybe there was a need to "pacify" Moses and to close the Torah *before* the conquest of the land, in order to emphasize that Israel's salvation did not depend on the land but on the law. Be that as it may, I hope to have shown why the Hellenistic non-Biblical accounts of Moses should be fully integrated in the scholarly debate about the formation of the Pentateuch.

Christian Belief and Violent Conflict

Tashio AONO

The main cause of the violent conflicts seen repeatedly in the history of Christianity has almost always been the exclusive Christian belief that the absolute salvation of humankind is possible only through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If the absolute, exclusive nature of this Christian belief is to be relativized, however, the attitude of Christians who strive to solve religious conflicts will surely have to change drastically.

My thesis is that the beginning steps in the process of this relativization can be found in Jesus himself and in Paul. As a New Testament scholar, I would like to point out these initial stages through biblical exegesis and reflect on how we can integrate them in our approach to establish peace among ourselves.

The starting point of my presentation is the recognition that the "death" of Jesus and the "cross" of Jesus have to be distinguished from each other. This point has been stressed strongly by Prof. H.-W. Kuhn of Munich University (Jesus als Gekreuzigter in der fruechristlichen Verkuendigung bis zur Mitte des 2. Jahrhunderts, ZThK 72, 1975, 1-46). Prof. Kuhn has pointed out that in Paul the references to the "cross" of Jesus and Jesus the "Crucified" are not interchangeable with the references to the "death" of Jesus. The "death" of Jesus is closely connected with the idea of atonement for us or for our sins, as it is typically expressed in the traditional and kerygmatic creed in 1 Cor. 15:3-5, whereas the noun "cross" and the verb "crucify" and its passive form "be cruci-