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**Abstract** Throughout its history, ancient Egyptian religion showed a remarkable capacity for adopting new religious ideas and characters and adapting them for use in an already existing system of worship. This process continued, and perhaps accelerated, during the Greco-Roman era of Egyptian history. Egyptian priests readily used foreign religious characters in their rituals and religious formulas, particularly from Greek and Jewish religions. Religious texts demonstrate that Egyptian priests knew of both biblical and nonbiblical accounts of many Jewish figures—especially Jehovah, Abraham, and Moses—by about 200 BC. Knowing this religio-cultural background helps us understand how the priest in Thebes who owned Joseph Smith Papyrus I would have been familiar with stories of Abraham.

# THE RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF JOSEPH SMITH PAPYRUS I

KERRY MUHLESTEIN

We can better appreciate the text of the Book of Abraham as we learn more about the culture and history in which it was created. Hence studies about Egypt, Canaan, and Mesopotamia during Abraham's day are important.<sup>1</sup> Studying the era when the papyri we still have were created can also offer important insights. While we do not currently know what the source of the Book of Abraham was, we do know the papyrus from which Facsimile 1 was taken was part of a larger roll owned by a priest in Thebes who lived about 200 BC.<sup>2</sup> Thus if we study what Egyptian priests knew of biblical characters in that time period, we can better understand why this priest would possess a drawing associated with Abraham. This study is aimed at better understanding the milieu from which the

## FROM THE EDITOR:

Most Latter-day Saints today recognize that the extant fragments of the Joseph Smith Papyri date at the earliest to a few hundred years before the birth of Christ. Yet they contain material that reaches back to the time of the Hebrew patriarchs. Professor Muhlestein tackles the question in this paper of how, when, and why Hebrew content found its way into authentic Egyptian material. It is a fascinating chapter in our understanding of Book of Abraham beginnings.





The original, extant fragment of Joseph Smith Papyrus I was used to produce Facsimile 1 in the Book of Abraham. Joseph Smith Papyrus © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

original of Facsimile 1 arose. While this article attempts neither to prove nor to disprove the veracity of Joseph Smith's interpretation, it does address some of the issues involved.<sup>3</sup> Joseph Smith's interpretation cannot be proved by studies such as this one, but understanding those interpretations can be enhanced by it.

### **Egyptians and Other Religious Ideas**

In the twilight of ancient Egyptian history, biblical names and figures were used in Egyptian contexts. Some studies have pursued the use of these figures in attempts to understand other aspects of Egypt.<sup>4</sup> However, much remains to be done to understand what these uses can teach us of Egypt and Egyptian religion itself<sup>5</sup> and hence the likely background of the Book of Abraham. This brief survey endeavors to answer those questions that must first be addressed if we are to move further in the study of such texts. These questions are (1) Who used biblical figures and stories? (2) What figures and stories did they use? (3) How did they use them? (4) Why did they use them? (5) When did they use them? (6) How did they learn of them? And (7) When did they learn of them? This study represents an initial phase of answering these questions and as such represents a necessary incipit to the academic study of the Book of Abraham.

### **Who Used Biblical Figures and Stories?**

The majority of the texts we will examine here come from a few important papyri caches. Many aspects of these papyri are international and intercultural. They come largely from within Egypt, and those that do not were found in the vicinity of Isis temples, which fact denotes an Egyptian association.<sup>6</sup> Most of the existing texts were written in Greek, though a significant number were written in Demotic—a script that most likely was used only by Egyptians themselves.<sup>7</sup>

There has been some debate as to which culture gave birth to these texts. While they show some similarities with Greek magical culture,<sup>8</sup> these similarities are minute when compared with Egyptian religious texts.<sup>9</sup> The texts follow the basic patterns of the Book of the Dead and do not demonstrate a notable shift from earlier Egyptian “magical” texts.<sup>10</sup> Instead the texts seem to represent another smooth step in the ongoing flow of Egyptian religious texts, with no noticeable break or change.

This is true for the other attestations of biblical figures in Egyptian contexts, such as funerary stelae (stone inscriptions). This study incorporates these uses that go beyond the examples found in papyri collections, but does not claim to be a comprehensive list of such sources. In all cases investigated, the material, historical, and geographic context, literary form, and genre are congruent with an Egyptian context.<sup>11</sup>

Figures from a variety of cultures were employed in these types of texts. Canaanite, Mesopotamian, Israelite, Greek, and Egyptian deities and figures are all used.<sup>12</sup> However, the majority of figures are Egyptian, suggesting an Egyptian backbone to the textual history of the manuscripts under study.

Additionally, most of these texts seem to have been owned by Egyptian priests—especially priests from Thebes. Those texts outside the Greek Magical Papyri corpus appear to have been composed by Egyptian priests. Furthermore, these texts fit into a chronological continuum: Christian magical texts from Egypt succeed the Greek Magical Papyri and use the same patterns, only discontinuing the use of Egyptian and Greek gods over time.<sup>13</sup> Yet these later texts are clearly Egyptian and thus support the argument that the earlier texts are also Egyptian in origin.

Taken together, all these evidences lead to the conclusion that these texts are Egyptian in nature. Surely they exhibit the influence of other cultures, but they are essentially Egyptian.

The aforementioned chronological continuum introduces a difficulty in categorizing the texts. For some texts, the dates and nature of language and figures employed make it certain that they represent either Egyptian or Christian religious ideas. However, a number of texts cannot be as easily classified; they may represent either Christian Egyptians using typical Egyptian texts, or they might be practitioners of Egyptian religion using these texts at a time when much of Egypt had become Christian. This study only uses texts that are comfortably categorized as Egyptian religious texts.

While we cannot discuss at length the term *magical* in connection with such texts,<sup>14</sup> I maintain that these texts are essentially religious in nature and do not represent anything out of the norm for Egyptian religion and religious practice. Thus *magical* is not the most accurate term because it denotes to the modern reader a practice that lies outside the

normal religious practice of any given culture. These texts seem to fit very well within mainstream religious practice in Egypt as carried out by those who were part of the religious establishment. However, the majority of texts used in this study are from the so-called Greek Magical Papyri, and even though I feel they are only partially Greek in script and language and I do not think they are magical in nature, it would be too confusing to refer to them by some other name.

### What Biblical Figures and Stories Were Used?

In order to determine what figures and stories were used, as well as when, where, and how they were employed, I entered each example into a spreadsheet. I examined over 750 examples. This allowed me to sort them according to which names and associated stories were used and how frequently. The number of biblical (and extrabiblical but still Jewish) figures and stories used in an Egyptian religious context is astonishing. A noncomprehensive list of nondivine names includes Abimelech,<sup>15</sup> Abraham,<sup>16</sup> Adam,<sup>17</sup> Ammon,<sup>18</sup> Aziel,<sup>19</sup> Dardanos,<sup>20</sup> David,<sup>21</sup> Emmanuel,<sup>22</sup> Gabriel,<sup>23</sup> Gomorrah,<sup>24</sup> Isaac,<sup>25</sup> Israel,<sup>26</sup> Jacob,<sup>27</sup> Jeremiah,<sup>28</sup> Jerusalem,<sup>29</sup> Judah,<sup>30</sup> Lot,<sup>31</sup> Lot's wife,<sup>32</sup> Michael,<sup>33</sup> Moses,<sup>34</sup> Solomon,<sup>35</sup> and even Osiris-Michael.<sup>36</sup> Names for the Israelite deity include Adonai,<sup>37</sup> Adonai Sabaoth<sup>38</sup> (as well as just Sabaoth, which is more common),<sup>39</sup> Elohim,<sup>40</sup> El,<sup>41</sup> God of the Hebrews,<sup>42</sup> Yaho<sup>43</sup> (the abbreviated version of Jehovah that was often employed by Jews in Egypt),<sup>44</sup> and blessed Lord God of Abraham,<sup>45</sup> along with many variations and combinations of these names and titles that undoubtedly refer to the Hebrew God, such as "He who drew back the Jordan River,"<sup>46</sup> or referencing the God who drove the winds at the Red Sea and met someone at the foot of the Holy Mount to reveal his great name.<sup>47</sup>

Naturally some of these names were used with much greater frequency than others. The names of deity, as a general rule, were employed more often than human names. Among these, Yaho (IAO, short for Jehovah) was by far the most common;<sup>48</sup> followed by the second most common, Sabaoth ("hosts"),<sup>49</sup> either appended to another form of the divine name (such as Yaho ["Jehovah of hosts"] or Adonai ["Lord of Hosts"]) or standing by itself; and



IAO in demotic  
Greek

Adonai, which is the third most common divine name.<sup>50</sup> All other forms of the divine name were used much less frequently than these three.

The biblical stories concerning Moses hinge around his coming into the presence of God. The burning-bush incident on Sinai and Moses's ability to be with God when all of Israel was afraid to approach God are the hallmarks of Moses's story.

Among nondivine personal names were three that were used much more frequently than any others. Michael was most often turned to in the texts.<sup>51</sup> Abraham was equally popular,<sup>52</sup> and Moses was employed nearly as frequently.<sup>53</sup> Among mortal figures, the names Moses and Abraham were most used in Egyptian texts.

We must also note which stories and accompanying elements were most commonly employed. Stories about Moses, typically referring to his experience on Mt. Sinai, were most common, although other events were also linked with him. Stories about Abraham were a close second. Few other figures had any story associated with them in the papyri at all.

### How Were Biblical Figures Used?

The most common types of texts that featured biblical figures include love charms, medical rituals such as salves for fevers, invocations to various deities (including Egyptian deities), rites for driving away hostile forces such as demons, amulets for success, rituals designed to bring supernatural figures and aids, rituals for helping to manage a spouse, charms for becoming invisible, spells for catching thieves, rituals for prophecy, charms for restraining anger, and even initiation rituals.

Little consistency is evident regarding what kind of text employed specific figures. As an example, texts commonly associated with Michael include spells for helping with fevers, for restraining anger, for love charms, for seeking favor, and for revelation or foreknowledge. It is tempting to conclude that Michael has some tie with these kinds of things, perhaps in particular with spells related to heat since fever, anger, and love are all associated with heat,



*Moses and the Burning Bush*, by Sebastien Bourdon. The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum / photo by Vladimir Terebenin, Leonard Kheifets, Yuri Molodkovets.

but a closer examination reveals that the frequency of associating these spells with Michael matches the overall frequency of these spells within the corpus. In other words, we do not see a pattern of connecting concepts with Michael that is any different than the pattern of associating things with biblical figures in general.

This same statement is true of all but two of the biblical figures. With the exception of Moses and Abraham, no biblical figures seem to demonstrate a pattern associated with any specific type of religious text. With Moses and Abraham a faint pattern exists, but it is not attested in high enough numbers

to dictate any firm conclusions. Nevertheless, these patterns are worth discussing.

Unsurprisingly, Moses is associated with theophanies. This cannot be coincidental since the biblical stories concerning Moses hinge around his coming into the presence of God. The burning-bush incident on Sinai (Exodus 3) and Moses's ability to be with God when all of Israel was afraid to approach God (Exodus 20 and 33, Deuteronomy 5 and 6) are the hallmarks of Moses's story. Thus the Egyptians used him for spells such as "Reveal yourself to me here today in the manner of the form of revealing yourself to Moses which you made upon the mountain."<sup>54</sup> Another manner of referring to Moses follows the typical Egyptian fashion of adopting the identity of the figure who had already done what you hoped to do, a practice I have termed "preternaturalization."<sup>55</sup> In other words, throughout Egyptian history we find a common practice of persons identifying themselves with other beings as a way of taking on the desired qualities of those beings. For example, if one were bitten by a snake, one might invoke a spell that insists that the person bitten by the snake has become Horus. This identification is valuable since Horus was believed to have survived a poisonous snake bite. By becoming Horus, a person hoped to take on his ability to survive what is normally a deadly experience.<sup>56</sup> This tendency toward identifying oneself with the preternatural is expressed in desires to be identified with both divine and famous figures from Israelite texts. Thus one spell says, "I am Moses your prophet to whom you have transmitted your mysteries."<sup>57</sup>

In the typical international pattern that many of these texts demonstrate, this same spell continues immediately with the declaration that "I am the messenger of Pharaoh Osoronnophris; this is your true name which has been transmitted to the prophets of Israel."<sup>58</sup> Yet, when the summoned deity is named, Adonai is among the many names listed, but most are fully unintelligible and seem to be only strange conglomerations of sounds. Thus we see that the story of Moses on the mount, while maintaining its Israelite essence, is mixed with a number of elements from other cultures. It also demonstrates the age-old custom of Egyptians preternaturalizing themselves and their circumstances by identifying with a preternatural character in hopes of bringing about the same success that individual had in the past.<sup>59</sup> The connection between Moses and the name of deity

expressed in the aforementioned spell is another of the traits associated with Moses in Egyptian religious texts. Again this is not surprising since one of the most remarkable moments in Moses’s first theophany is asking God for his name and the revelation of “I am that I am” (Exodus 3:14). This element of Moses’s story is similar enough to the Egyptian desire to learn the names of deity that it is incorporated into a number of texts. One further example comes from a text that names itself the “book of Moses” and describes itself as being “the ritual using the name that encompasses all things. It also has directions for a meeting with the god.”<sup>60</sup> Again, this spell incorporates the two defining moments of Moses’s first Sinai experience: coming into God’s presence and learning his name. Clearly the priests who authored this spell were familiar with the biblical story and saw parallels between its significant elements and their own religious endeavors.<sup>61</sup>

The other distinguishable pattern is of a different nature. While the stories associated with Moses dictate the use of his name in Egyptian religious texts, it is not entirely clear why Abraham became associated with Osiris. Again, the pattern is not strong, but it exists. It is curious to note that in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man—a parable that has a number of parallels with an earlier Egyptian tale known as the Setna II story—in the place Osiris would have occupied in an Egyptian context, Jesus instead mentions Abraham.<sup>62</sup> This may indicate that the parallel was first conceived of in Jewish thought, though we cannot be sure.

In any case, there are enough instances in which Abraham appears in contexts normally occupied by Osiris that we must conclude the Egyptians saw some sort of connection between the two. John Gee has pointed out one of the strongest associations, noting that in a number of instances the phrase “live in the presence of Osiris” was replaced in Greek by “rest in Abraham’s bosom.”<sup>63</sup>

Similarly, in a drawing that accompanies a text for a love charm,<sup>64</sup> the text specifically notes that the drawing is associated with the spell. The vignette depicts a mummiform figure on a lion couch. Here we would typically expect to identify the figure with Osiris, but the text notes that it is Abraham on the couch.<sup>65</sup> All these instances occur within an Egyptian religious context, making it clear that for whatever reason, the Egyptians viewed Abraham as



Lion couch vignette with the name Abraham highlighted directly below it. P. Leiden I 364, last column (AD 3rd–4th century). © Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden NL.

an appropriate parallel for Osiris—if not *the* most appropriate parallel.

In summary, biblical figures were used by Egyptians in basically the same manner that Egyptian figures were used. As with Egyptian characters, when a particular story highlighted a desirable attribute, Egyptians sought to identify themselves with the figure in that story in order to garner that attribute to themselves.<sup>66</sup> On the whole, the use of biblical figures in Egyptian religious texts did not represent any kind of shift or change but rather should be viewed as an expansion of who was being used in the search for interaction with the supernatural. Biblical figures joined a host of others in the Egyptian penchant for preternaturalization.<sup>67</sup>

### Why Were Biblical Figures Used?

With this rudimentary understanding of how biblical figures were used in Egyptian religious contexts, we must ask why they were used. I assert that the use of these figures merely represents the natural progression of propensities that had been present in Egyptian religion for millennia. The Egyptian tendency had always been to keep old religious ideas while adopting new ones when encountered. Thus the rise of Ra in religious thought did not lead to the exclusion of Osiris but rather to an expanded core





Within the tomb of Nefertari, Nephthys and Isis support the composite figure of Osiris and Ra. In this unusual depiction, the inscriptions say they are “at peace” with each other.  
© Borromeo / Art Resource, NY.

of important deities.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, the subsequent increased attention to Amun allowed for the expansion of religious focus. Far from displacing Ra, sometimes even an increased attention to the sun god was witnessed, as well as to the unified form of Amun-Ra.<sup>69</sup>

This same pattern was exhibited not only intramurally, but also with extramural expansion, including Levantine religious figures. Examples include the well-established Sethian *interpretation aegyptiaca* of Ba'al and his various versions.<sup>70</sup> Familiarity with Byblian gods is attested as early as the Old Kingdom<sup>71</sup> and continued thereafter, but the practice of mixing Egyptian gods and practices with foreign gods and religious elements truly flourished in the Ptolemaic era, as witnessed by the Serapis and Isis cults. Jacco Dieleman has argued that many of the texts in the Greek Magical Papyri demonstrate signs of Egyptian priests having studied and then incorporated both Greek characters and characteristics of Greek religious texts.<sup>72</sup> Rather than asking why the Egyptians would incorporate the religious figures of the Israelites, we would instead be surprised if they did not.<sup>73</sup>

In fact, Israelite religious beliefs and stories had a number of things to offer the Egyptians. As Arthur Nock has pointed out, Israelite religion could offer the Egyptians stories associated with sanctity and sacred space, amulets, angels, a personal relationship with deity, and a god who acted in history.<sup>74</sup>

We can actually turn to an ancient eyewitness to ascertain at least some of the reasoning behind the practice of using biblical figures in Egyptian religion. Origen, while decidedly biased against the trend, reported that “many also of those who give themselves to the practice of the conjuration of evil spirits, employ in their spells the expression ‘God of Abraham,’ pointing out by the very name the friendship (that existed) between that just man and God. And yet, while making use of the phrase ‘God of Abraham,’ they do not know who Abraham is! And the same remark applies to Isaac, and Jacob, and Israel; which names, although confessedly Hebrew, are frequently introduced by those Egyptians who profess to produce some wonderful result by means of their knowledge.”<sup>75</sup>

Origen is explicit about what could already be implied from the Egyptian custom of co-opting other cultures’ religious characters. It would seem that they believed that if more gods and supernaturally connected characters existed, they gained an advantage

## ORIGEN

Origenes Adamantius (ca. 185–255) grew up in Alexandria, Egypt, and studied in the Christian Catechetical School under Clement of Alexandria. He knew the works of Philo (a Jewish philosopher who lived about the time of Christ) and studied pagan philosophy as well as Christian thought. After becoming the head of the Catechetical School in 203, he learned Hebrew to study the Old Testament and by his efforts became the first great Christian scholar. Because of a controversy with his bishop in 231, Origen settled at Caesarea in Palestine, where he set up a major library and research center. His numerous compositions included textual criticism of the Bible, biblical commentary, systematic theology, apologetics, and sermons. He shares a number of beliefs with Latter-day Saints, including the premortal existence of souls, moral agency, the belief that the Father and the Son are separate persons though one in will, and the belief that God exalts his faithful servants to become gods.

DANIEL GRAHAM

in appealing to these preternatural options as well as to those they had known previously. In typical Egyptian fashion they attempted to heighten their chances of obtaining their desires from the divine realm by appealing to an ever-increasing spectrum of potential preternatural allies.<sup>76</sup>

If we consider syncretism in the broader sense in which it is not just a harmonizing of various deities but an amalgamation of various aspects of religion, then what we witness in the case of biblical figures is a typical example of Egyptian syncretism. Indeed, it is the specific manifestation of a trait attested in Egypt and throughout the Near East.<sup>77</sup>

### When Were Biblical Figures Used?

Having established this embryonic idea of why biblical figures were employed by Egyptians in their religious practices, we must also attempt to learn when they began doing so. In this attempt, we must keep in mind the inherent limitations that beset us in ascertaining such dating. Not only are we forced to use rough dates based on paleography, style, and so forth, but we also know that we are basing our evidence on limited information. Most of our data stems from one major cache, with a few other attestations from other contexts. This accident of both preservation and excavation must be kept in mind when purporting a *terminus post quem*, or date after which the practice must have begun. The practice likely began before the attestations that have been found. Having acknowledged this, we can do nothing other than employ the data we have, while always bearing in mind its limitations.

Papyrus Amherst 63 contains the oldest known version of any biblical psalms. The papyrus was written in Demotic during the Persian era, about the fourth century BC.<sup>78</sup> While this does not tell us how these figures were regarded or employed, the fact that it was written in Demotic says something of its author and indicates a date when at least some Egyptians were becoming familiar with biblical texts.

The earliest known employment of something biblical in an active Egyptian religious context is from the first century BC.<sup>79</sup> Another papyrus from this same time period is so fragmented that little can be made of it, but at least part of it deals with a Syrian woman.<sup>80</sup>

During the next century the attestations begin to multiply, especially the use of the names Yaho and

Adonai.<sup>81</sup> This trend continued during the second century AD and flourished during the third.<sup>82</sup> During the fourth century the continual proliferation of biblical uses reached a height that would remain steady for some time.<sup>83</sup> Thus while the practice would flower in the early centuries AD, these centuries were merely continuing a trend that began some time before, clearly at least by the first century BC. It is interesting to note that the use of biblical figures in Egyptian religion does not seem to be affected by periods of anti-Semitic or anti-Christian movements.

### How Did the Egyptians Learn of Biblical Characters?

Significant numbers of Jews had been in Egypt for hundreds of years by the time elements of their religious texts began showing up in Egyptian religious texts. They had come largely as refugees or mercenaries. They lived throughout Egypt, especially in



The Jewish presence in Egypt—represented by temples, synagogues, schools, and papyri finds—was surprisingly large and is only hinted at here. Map by Bob Cronan, Lucidity Info Design, LLC.

Alexandria. The largest non-Alexandrian concentrations were in Edfu, Thebes, Leontopolis, and the Fayoum<sup>84</sup> during the time period of the texts we are studying.<sup>85</sup> The Jews built temples and synagogues, and while many remained somewhat separate from their host culture, a significant number had assimilated much of Egypt into their lives and had become active participants in Egyptian society.

While most of our textual evidence from Jews appears to be in Aramaic, employing this criterion to determine when to use the label “Jewish” is somewhat problematic. Anything that a Jew wrote in some form of Egyptian or Greek is less recognizable as Jewish in origin.

We know of a number of circumstances that would have piqued a favorable interest in Jewish ideas and texts among Egypt’s Hellenic rulers. For example, one second-century-BC Jew from Alexandria said the God of the Jews also protected Ptolemy.

A thorough investigation into the Jewish presence in Egypt would comprise a major monograph,<sup>86</sup> so we will establish only a basic framework of potential Jewish-Egyptian interaction in order to understand something of how biblical figures came into use in Egyptian religion. Jewish-Hellenistic interaction will also be highlighted because it serves as a conduit into Egyptian religious culture as well. We will first look at some of the more important forms of evidence for a Jewish presence, and then we will examine only a few of the higher-profile examples of opportunity for the diffusion of Jewish ideas and literature into the larger Ptolemaic and Roman Egyptian culture.

While there was certainly Israelite interaction with Egypt before the seventh century BC, there was a quantitative leap at that time, when large groups of Jews entered Egypt permanently as both refugees and mercenaries.<sup>87</sup> The influx of refugees was significant but not steady, similar to the inflow of Jewish men who served as part of the Egyptian army.<sup>88</sup> Though some of these immigrants would settle in primarily Egyptian areas, most formed into Jewish colonies.<sup>89</sup> These colonies were typically portions of an already

settled area. Later, under the Ptolemies, the Jewish population of Egypt witnessed a “steady increase,”<sup>90</sup> with Jews often considered Hellenes who served in a variety of high and low civic positions.<sup>91</sup> Eventually over twenty-five Egyptian towns contained a synagogue, and some of these housed more than one.<sup>92</sup> As the third largest ethnic community in Egypt, Jews were a significant enough group to have attracted the attention of both the ruling and the native populations. Equally significant is the fact that people of influence from these cultures were familiar with and looked positively upon Jewish culture, as will be demonstrated below.

As we now turn to specific instances that demonstrate possible conduits of intercultural influence, concentrating specifically on those from this general time period, we will see that some of the earliest examples come from an early Ptolemaic presence in Egypt. Hecataeus of Abdera wrote favorably of the Jews in about 300 BC.<sup>93</sup> Hecataeus was known in Egypt during the reign of Ptolemy I and is reported to have written a work about Abraham in Egypt.<sup>94</sup> In this work he extolled Moses, spoke very highly of the Jews, and claimed that the Bible was a sacred book.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, the roughly contemporary Zosimus, probably an Egyptian practicing Egyptian religion, referred to a Jewish text—either Genesis, Jubilees, or Enoch—as “our book.”<sup>96</sup>

Other possible influences from this same time period include the high priest Hezekiah joining Ptolemy I. According to Hecataeus, Ptolemy I granted the Jews the status of *politeuma*, allowing them to live according to their ancestral laws.<sup>97</sup> With large groups of Jews throughout the country, especially in Alexandria, the opportunity for knowledge of their traditions was ample. Many of them associated with non-Jews quite freely, even to the point that Alexandrian Jews were allowed to be titled “Macedonians.”<sup>98</sup> Jews served in various high military and civil positions.<sup>99</sup> Because some of these Jews kept their “ancestral laws” (the laws of Moses), their rulers and employers also had to develop some degree of familiarity with Jewish culture. Hence knowledge of Jewish customs and ideas spread to some degree among the elite in Egypt out of necessity. Works such as Demetrius’s (ca. 220 BC) *On the Kings of Judea* arose from this milieu, as Jews and those familiar with them published things Jewish couched in trappings and vehicles recognizable to Hellenes.<sup>100</sup>

We know of a number of circumstances that would have piqued a favorable interest in Jewish ideas and texts among Egypt's Hellenic rulers. For example, one second-century-BC Jew from Alexandria said the God of the Jews also protected Ptolemy.<sup>101</sup> The Sibylline Oracles, documents from about 150 BC in Egypt, contain the writings of Jews who spoke of things Israelite but who also hailed the Ptolemaic king as a messiah sent to save them.<sup>102</sup> Philo of Alexandria, a first-century-AD Jewish priest, wrote that the Bible taught Middle Platonic ideas, as well as that Abraham was both a philosopher and lover of God. He cast the revelations to Abraham as an oracle.<sup>103</sup> Such a perception seems similar to those held by the priests who incorporated Abraham and others into Egyptian spells and other religious texts. Hence Egyptian priests must have known of biblical texts at this time.

The creation of the Septuagint under Ptolemy II would have greatly facilitated the spread of biblical knowledge throughout Egypt. This was a subcurrent in the larger torrent of internationalization that characterized the onset of the Hellenistic period, and Egypt was no exception. Soon thereafter, Greek-style literature popularized Jewish characters and probably spread such knowledge even further than the Septuagint.<sup>104</sup> Noncanonical stories about figures like Joseph, Jacob, and especially Abraham seem to have been particularly popular. In the Abrahamic extrabiblical sources, a common theme is Abraham's arrival in Egypt to teach things like astronomy to the Egyptians. Eupolemus wrote during the mid-second century BC that Abraham lived in Heliopolis with priests and taught them astrology.<sup>105</sup> Sometime before the first century BC, Artapanus wrote that Abraham came to Egypt and taught astrology to Pharaoh.<sup>106</sup> Philo, the epic poet who wrote in the third or second century BC, referred to Abraham as "far-famed"; all the instances we have considered thus far attest that he indeed became such in Egypt.<sup>107</sup>

### When Did They Become Familiar with Biblical Figures?

While this paper provides only the briefest of surveys regarding how knowledge of biblical texts and characters could have spread to practitioners of Egyptian religion, it has made clear that there were abundant avenues and that the *zeitgeist* of intercultural exchange was such that we would be surprised



"Abraham, Abraham" (enhanced graphically) appears in Genesis 22:11 on this fragment of the Codex Sinaiticus. Courtesy of St. Catherine's Monastery.

if the Egyptian elite were not familiar with the Jewish texts. Now we must ask when they became so. The question here is not when a few people became familiar with a few texts, but when knowledge of the texts became common enough among those who shaped Egyptian religious practice that they started to incorporate Jewish ideas into their religious thought and practice on a large scale.<sup>108</sup>

We must not yield to the temptation to generalize geographically. There is no reason to assume that those who were familiar with biblical figures at this time period were representative of the entire country. Of course we cannot ascertain such a date with any degree of certainty. Instead we can look at the evidence we have, employ a few well-thought-out assumptions, and come up with a tentative date range.

As mentioned above, the earliest known religious texts to employ Jewish names are from roughly the first century BC. We must assume that the priest(s) who authored these ritual texts had been familiar with the characters long enough to have worked them into the composition of such spells when the occasion arose to create new religious texts. Thus we can safely posit a date of about 100 BC as the latest point at which priests in Thebes became familiar with both biblical and extrabiblical Jewish stories.

This date is based on an assumption of how long it would have taken for knowledge of biblical figures to work its way into Egyptian religious texts. We have no firm evidence on which to calculate this

date. We must rely on the commonsense notion that it would indeed take some time, but we can use clues to more precisely hone our estimate. We can look at the dates noted above that indicate that influential people were familiar with such characters, even if these people were not those who would eventually incorporate them into Egyptian religious texts. Our earliest significant figures whose writings demonstrate that they knew well both canonical and noncanonical stories associated with biblical characters are Hecataeus of Abdera, Zosimus, Philo the epic poet, Eupolemus, and Artapanus. These men, dating from 300 to 150 BC, demonstrated a respect for and familiarity with Jewish figures. These dates correspond well with the earliest Egyptian religious texts that employ such figures, and they even push the date a little earlier. If we harmonize these dates with the date of our earliest known attestation of using biblical figures, we can say that these texts were known by at least 150 BC—perhaps even 300 BC or earlier. A very safe and likely date would be ca. 200 BC. The fact that Hor, priest of Thebes in about 200 BC, owned an Egyptian drawing that was somehow associated with Abraham is another piece of evidence that suggests this date is correct.

### Conclusions

While there is much more research to be done, a few things have become clear in this survey that are of interest to Latter-day Saints. First, in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, biblical stories and characters were employed in Egyptian religious practice. These stories and characters were added to the already existing repertoire of Egyptian, Canaanite, and Greek gods and mythical characters. Biblical figures were used in a manner similar to Egyptian figures. They were used in a variety of contexts with no clear pattern emerging. Two of the characters who loom largest in the Jewish canon—Abraham and Moses—were used in contexts that were in keeping with their biblical stories. These uses demonstrate that the creators of these religious texts were thoroughly familiar with both canonical and noncanonical texts about these characters. Our current evidence indicates that a group of priests from Thebes possessed, read, understood, and employed biblical and extrabiblical texts, most especially texts about Abraham and Moses.

This process likely began around 200 BC and continued for hundreds of years in a pattern that

eventually morphed into Christian practices in Egypt. While a few textual examples from elsewhere in Egypt suggest that this practice was widespread, at this time our sample of evidence only allows us to make these conclusions for the Theban area, the area in which the priest who owned the original of Facsimile 1 lived and served. Further discoveries may allow us to refine or expand these conclusions.

As a result of these conclusions we can better understand why Hor, a Theban priest in 200 BC, would possess papyrus associated with Abraham. He was a product of his times who was informed by his culture and in turn had opportunity to inform that culture. His interest in biblical characters and his possession of both biblical and nonbiblical stories about these characters was part of his occupation. Hor would undoubtedly have been interested in any religious stories that could have been incorporated into, and thus given more power to, his priestly duties.

Interestingly, we know that Hor was involved with rituals that had to do with calling on preternatural aid to ward off potential evil forces.<sup>109</sup> These rituals often involved either real or figurative human sacrifice.<sup>110</sup> Now that we know that priests from Hor's era and geographic location would have used biblical figures to augment their religious rituals and spells, we better understand why he would have been interested in the story depicted on Facsimile 1, that of a biblical figure who was saved from sacrifice by divine intervention. It is likely that Hor sought out appropriate stories, and then used his knowledge of the story of Abraham to add further numinous power to his appeal for preternatural aid in keeping destructive forces at bay. Hor's possession of this drawing matches what we would expect of a priest in this time and place based on the understanding of that culture gained from this study. ■



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## NOTES

1. For examples, see John Gee, "Overlooked Evidence for Sesostrius III's Foreign Policy," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 41 (2004): 23-31; and Kerry Muhlestein, "Levantine Thinking in Egypt," in *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature*, ed. Shay Bar, Dan'el Kahn, and J. J. Shirley (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 190-235.
2. See Marc Coenen, "The Dating of the Papyri Joseph Smith I, X and XI and Min Who Massacres His Enemies," in *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years, Part II. Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur*, ed. Willy Clarysse, Antoon Schoors, and Harco Willems (Leuven: Peeters, 1998); Robert K. Ritner, "The 'Breathing Permit of Hôr' Thirty-Four Years Later," *Dialogue* 33/4 (2000): 99; Marc Coenen, "Horos, Prophet of Min Who Massacres His Enemies," *Chronique d'Égypte* 74 (1999): 257-59; John Gee, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000), 25-27; John Gee, "History of a Theban Priesthood," in «*Et maintenant ce ne sont plus que des villages...*» *Thèbes et sa région aux époques hellénistique, romaine et byzantine. Actes du colloque tenu à Bruxelles les 2 et 3 Décembre 2005*, ed. Alain Delattre and Paul Heilporn (Bruxelles: Association Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 2008), 67-69; Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 2005), 20; and Jan Quaegebeur, "Books of Thoth Belonging to Owners of Portraits? On Dating Late Hieratic Funerary Papyri," in *Portraits and Masks: Burial Customs in Roman Egypt*, ed. Morris L. Bierbrier (London: British Museum, 1997), 74. While Nibley and Ritner prefer the later Roman period date, the earlier date espoused by Gee, Quaegebeur, and Coenen is almost certainly correct.
3. A version of this article was published as Kerry Muhlestein, "Abraham, Isaac, and Osiris-Michael: The Use of Biblical Figures in Egyptian Religion," in the proceedings of *Achievements and Problems of Modern Egyptology*, ed. Galina A. Belova (Moscow: Russian Academy of Sciences, 2012), 246-59.
4. See, for example, Janet H. Johnson, "Louvre E3229: A Demotic Magical Text," *Enchoria* 7 (1977): 55-102; John Gee, "Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7/1 (1995): 19-84; Arthur D. Nock, "Greek Magical Papyri," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 15 (1929): 219-35; Robert K. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1993), 2, 4, 88-92, 109-10, 182, 240-41.
5. Johnson, "Louvre E3229," 97.
6. See Gee, "Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob," 46.
7. Ann E. Hanson, "Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Arabes, and Ioudaioi in the First Century A.D. Tax Archive from Philadelphia: P. Mich. Inv. 880 Recto and P. Princ. III 152 Revised," in *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond*, ed. Janet H. Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 136, has suggested that some Greeks learned Demotic. This is contrary to the general consensus that in the Greco-Roman period Demotic was used only by Egyptians; see Gee, "Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob," 42; Willy Clarysse, "Egyptian Scribes Writing Greek," *Chronique d'Égypte* 68 (1993): 187-88; William J. Tait, "Demotic Literature and Egyptian Society," in Johnson, *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society*, 307-10; and Edwin R. Bevan, *The House of Ptolemy: A History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1927), 84.
8. Warren R. Dawson, "Anastasi, Sallier, and Harris and Their Papyri," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 35 (1949): 158-59.
9. There is agreement on this among Egyptologists who specialize in this type of literature from this time period. See Johnson, "Louvre E3229," 7, 87, 94; Janet H. Johnson, "The Dialect of the Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden," in *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes*, ed. Janet H. Johnson and Edward F. Wente (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1976), 105-32; Gee, "Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob," 35, 43; Klaus Koch, *Geschichte der ägyptischen Religion* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1993), 542; Robert K. Ritner, "Egyptian Magical Practice under the Roman Empire: The Demotic Spells and Their Religious Context," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995), 3333-79. Contrary views can be found in Christopher A. Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 35-36; and Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 5. The most nuanced treatment of this is from Jacco Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)* (Leiden: Brill, 2005). Even in this carefully thought-out and constructed discussion, Dieleman concludes that at least the portion of the library he studies arose from an Egyptian scribal and priestly tradition and stemmed from "an Egyptian temple milieu" (p. 22).
10. Gee, "Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob," 44. For examples of this, see Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites*, 170-82.
11. See Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites*, 282-84.
12. See Nock, "Greek Magical Papyri," 228-29.
13. See Marvin W. Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (New York City: HarperCollins 1994). The most comprehensive treatment on Christianity in Egypt is C. Wilfred Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity: From Its Origins to 451 C.E.* (Leiden: Brill, 1990).
14. See Ritner, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 3-28; Gee, "Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob," 74-81.
15. P. Leipzig 39.
16. Stela BM 1360.
17. Greek Magical Papyri (PGM) XIII, 973-74.
18. PGM CXXII, 1-55.
19. PGM XXXVI, 161-77.
20. PGM IV, 1716. This seems to be Darda from 1 Kings 4:31.
21. P. Leipzig 39.
22. PGM XC, 1-13.
23. PGM XXIIa, 18-27.
24. PGM XXXVI, 295-311.
25. PGM CV, 1-15.
26. PGM XXXVI, 295-310.
27. PGM IV, 1234.
28. PGM IV, 3041.
29. PGM XLV, 1-8.
30. P. Leipzig 39.
31. PGM XXXVI, 295-310.
32. PGM XXXVI, 295-310.
33. PGM LXXX, 1-5.

34. PGM VII, 619-27.
35. PGM XCIV, 17-21.
36. PGM XXIIb, 27-31.
37. PGM CXXV, a-f.
38. PGM XII, 286.
39. PGM XXXV, 20-28.
40. PGM XII, 286.
41. PGM XLVII, 1-10.
42. PGM XXIIb, 16-26.
43. PGM XIII, 201. I am grateful to John Gee for looking over these names with me, giving me linguistic advice, and helping my thought process progress. He especially helped me think through the uses of the term *IAO*.
44. The temple at Elephantine was dedicated to Yaho. For more, see Peter C. Nadig, "We Beg You, Our King! Some Reflections on the Jews in Persian and Ptolemaic Egypt," in *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant*, ed. John Gee and Brian M. Hauglid (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2005), 84.
45. PGM V, 480-83.
46. PGM IV, 3055.
47. PGM XII, 85-95.
48. Used over 200 times.
49. Employed at least 40 times.
50. Used at least 35 times.
51. While Michael was viewed as supernatural, being an angel, he was not seen as divine and thus is classified with the nondivine figures. This name was expressed approximately 30 times.
52. Also used 30 times.
53. Moses is referred to 20 times.
54. PDM XIV, 129-31/P. Mag. 8/8. See John Gee, "The Structure of Lamp Divination," in *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies, Copenhagen 23-27 August 1999*, ed. Kim Ryholt (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2002), 213. Lest any feel I have bent a translation toward my particular viewpoint, all translations are taken from the standard English editions of these texts. This translation is from Hans D. Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation: Including the Demotic Spells*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 202.
55. See Kerry Muhlestein, "Empty Threats? How Egyptians' Self-Ontology Should Affect the Way We Read Many Texts," *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 34 (2007): 120-21.
56. See Geraldine Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum, 2006), 18-32.
57. PGM V, 109, as in Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, 103.
58. PGM V, 115.
59. Muhlestein, "Empty Threats," 117-18.
60. PGM XIII, 345-47, as in Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, 182.
61. For example, note the importance of learning names in the Setna cycles, or the lengths Isis goes to in her attempts to learn Re's secret name.
62. For some of the more significant works on this, see Kendrick Grobel, ". . . Whose Name Was Neves," *New Testament Studies* 10/3 (1963-1964): 373-82; Hugo Gressmann, *Vom reichen Mann und armen Lazarus: Eine literargeschichtliche Studie* (Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1918); and Kevin L. Barney, "The Facsimiles and Semitic Adaptation of Existing Sources," in Gee and Hauglid, *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant*, 119-21.
63. John Gee, "A New Look at the 'nh p3 by Formula," in *Actes du IX<sup>e</sup> congrès international des études démotiques: Paris, 31 août - 3 septembre 2005*, ed. Ghislaine Widmer and Didier Devauchelle (Cairo: Institut Français Archéologie Orientale, 2009), 143. While Gee has discovered many more than this, in his article he notes KSB I, 429, 430, 433, 460, 601-2, 606 and BM 607. In some cases the phrase includes Isaac and Jacob along with Abraham.
64. On love charms and violence, see Ritner, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 112-13; and Kerry Muhlestein, "Execration Ritual," in *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, ed. Willeke Wendrich and Jacco Dieleman (Los Angeles: UCLA, <http://www.uee.ucla.edu>, 2008).
65. PDM XII, 140, as in Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, 171. See also John Gee, "References to Abraham Found in Two Egyptian Texts," *Insights* 11/5 (1991): 1, 3; and John Gee, "Research and Perspectives: Abraham in Ancient Egyptian Texts," *Ensign*, July 1992, 60.
66. Muhlestein, "Empty Threats," 121; J. F. Borghouts, trans., *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), vi-ix.
67. John Baines, "Egyptian Myth and Discourse: Myth, Gods, and the Early Written and Iconographic Record," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 50/2 (1991): 96; Muhlestein, "Empty Threats," 124-25; Katarina Nordh, *Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Curses and Blessings: Conceptual Background and Transmission* (Stockholm: Gotab, 1996), 95.
68. See, for example, Stephen Quirke, *The Cult of Ra: Sun-Worship in Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001), 45-51, 171; Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, John Baines, trans. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 92-93.
69. For more on this, see Jan Assmann, *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom: Re, Amun and the Crisis of Polytheism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 140-42, 150-55.
70. Thomas Schneider, "Texte über den syrischen Wettergott aus Ägypten," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 35 (2003): 606-10; Schneider, "Foreign Egypt: Egyptology and the Concept of Cultural Appropriation," *Ägypten und Levante* 13 (2003): 160-61; Schneider, "Innovation in Literature on Behalf of Politics: The Tale of the Two Brothers, Ugarit, and 19th Dynasty History," *Ägypten und Levante* 18 (2008): 316-19.
71. Siegfried H. Horn, "Foreign Gods in Ancient Egypt," in *Studies in Honor of John A. Wilson*, ed. Gerald E. Kadish (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 37. Horn believes that the Seth/Ba'al connection began with the Hyksos.
72. Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites*, 293-94.
73. Martin Rist, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: A Liturgical and Magical Formula," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 57/3 (1938): 289-303, independently asks this same question.
74. Nock, "Greek Magical Papyri," 228.
75. Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.22.
76. Kerry Muhlestein, *Violence in the Service of Order: The Religious Framework for Sanctioned Killing in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2011), 20, 28-29; Muhlestein, "Empty Threats," 121-25.
77. See Nock, "Greek Magical Papyri," 229.
78. See Gee, "Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob," 74; John Gee, "La Trahison des Clercs: On the Language and Translation of the Book of Mormon," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 96-99.
79. PGM CXXII.
80. PGM XX, 4-12.

81. See PGM XVI and LVII for several uses.
82. See PGM XXXIIa, PDM XIV, PGM LXXXII, and PDM IV for several uses.
83. See PGM VII, PGM CV, and PGM CVI for many examples.
84. See Kerry Muhlestein and Courtney Innes, "Synagogues and Cemeteries: Evidence for a Jewish Presence in the Fayum," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 4/2 (2012): 53-59.
85. My thorough cataloguing of onomastic evidence, gleaned from Jan K. Winnicki, *Late Egypt and Her Neighbours: Foreign Population in Egypt in the First Millennium BC*, trans. Dorota Dzierzbicka (Warsaw: Institute of Archaeology of Warsaw University, 2009), reveals that of 551 names examined, by far the four most common origins are as follows: 156 are from the Fayoum (28.3%), 119 from Edfu (21.6%), 75 from Leontopolis (13.6%), and 26 from Thebes (4.7%), though this last figure is colored by the fact that at some point a number of Jews from Thebes moved to the Fayoum (see below). Also see S. Honigman, "Abraham in Egypt: Hebrew and Jewish-Aramaic Names in Egypt and Judaea in Hellenistic and Early Roman Times," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 146 (2004): 290, 295.
86. Such as Joseph M. Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt: From Rameses II to Emperor Hadrian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).
87. See Modrzejewski, *Jews of Egypt*, 25.
88. See Dan'el Kahn, "Judean Auxiliaries in Egypt's Wars against Kush," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 127/4 (2007): 507-16.
89. Both Hecataeus and Diodorus note how exclusive and separatist the Jews generally were.
90. Nadig, "We Beg You, Our King!" 86. See also Gee, "Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob," 79; Aryeh Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985), 1-28; Barbara Waterson, *Coptic Egypt* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1988), 1-3, 17-24; and Naphtali Lewis, *Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt: Case Studies in the Social History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 14, 21, 162.
91. Nadig, "We Beg You, Our King!" 86-87.
92. Cities with a notable Jewish population and synagogue include: **Athribis**: See OGIS I, 96, as in William Horbury and David Noy, eds., *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992), 45-47; see also Winnicki, *Late Egypt*, 241. **Leontopolis**: CPJ I, as in Victor A. Tcherikover, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 44-46. See also Mathias Delcor, "Le temple d'Onias en Égypte," in *Revue biblique* 75 (1968): 188-203; see Kasher, *Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 119-35; Winnicki, *Late Egypt*, 241; and Nadig, "We Beg You, Our King!" 89-91. **Krokodilopolis**: See Peder Borgen, *Early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1996), 76; P. Tebt. I 86, 14-31 (CPJ I 134); Winnicki, *Late Egypt*, 243. **Trikomia**: See Pros. Ptol. I 713; see also Winnicki, *Late Egypt*, 245. **Thebes**: See P. Cowley 81 and 82; see also Kasher, *Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 158-160; and Winnicki, *Late Egypt*, 247. **Edfu**: See Winnicki, *Late Egypt*, 248-49. Of course, there was also a large Jewish presence in Alexandria itself.
93. See Stanley M. Burstein, "Hecataeus of Abdera's History of Egypt," in *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond*, ed. Janet Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 46; and Felix Jacoby, "Hekataios," in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1980), 7:2751-52.
94. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 1.7.2; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 5.113; John A. Tvedtnes, Brian M. Hauglid, and John Gee, eds., *Traditions about the Early Life of Abraham* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2001), 3; Robert Doran, "Pseudo-Hecataeus," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 2:905-6.
95. Doran, "Pseudo-Hecataeus," 906.
96. Raphael Patai, *The Jewish Alchemists: A History and Source Book* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 56. Gee, in "Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob," 45 and n. 125, disagrees with Patai, *Jewish Alchemists*, 56, seeing no reason to assume that Zosimus was a Jew. Patai's main reason for doing so was the phrase *our book*, but in light of what is presented in this paper, it is clear that such a phrase does not necessarily indicate he was a Jew.
97. Borgen, *Early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism*, 77. See also Letter of Aristeas 310.
98. Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.18.7. See also Borgen, *Early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism*, 78.
99. Kasher, *Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 58-63; Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1961), 348; Tcherikover, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, 30-32; Borgen, *Early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism*, 79.
100. For a discussion on this, see Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), xiv. Examples of such texts include the tragedy of Ezekiel and the epics of Theodotus and Philo.
101. Letter of Aristeas 15. My gratitude to Erich S. Gruen for pointing this reference out to me in the lecture "The 'Assimilated' Jew: Hellenism and Judaism at the Border," given at Brigham Young University, September 2009.
102. Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:355-56.
103. *De Cherubim* 7; *De Somniis* 60; *De Abrahamo* 60-62, as in Tvedtnes, Hauglid, and Gee, *Early Life of Abraham*, 35, 38.
104. Honigman, "Abraham in Egypt," 146, 296.
105. Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.17.2-9, as in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:880-82; and Tvedtnes, Hauglid, and Gee, *Early Life of Abraham*, 8.
106. Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.18.1, as in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:897; and Tvedtnes, Hauglid, and Gee, *Early Life of Abraham*, 7.
107. Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.20.1, as in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:783; and Tvedtnes, Hauglid, and Gee, *Early Life of Abraham*, 6.
108. See Gee, "Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob," 75.
109. Gee, "History of a Theban Priesthood," 67-70.
110. Muhlestein, "Execration Ritual."