

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

PUTTING HIM BACK TOGETHER AGAIN: APION HISTORIAN, APION *GRAMMATIKOS*

For students of antiquity Apion inhabits two worlds. To scholars of ancient Judaism he is familiar as the author of a history of Egypt, the *Aegyptiaca*, in the course of which he attacked the Jews and their past, and so became the target of rebuttal later by Josephus in his tract the *Contra Apionem*. For another group, those interested in the history of criticism in antiquity, especially Homeric scholarship, Apion is the author of an important lexicon of Homeric diction, the *Glossai Homerikai*. It is in part due to the goals of two massive scholarly projects, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* and the *Sammlung griechischer und lateinischer Grammatiker*, that the two main areas of Apion's work have not only been preserved (if only in fragments), but have also been, for the most part, kept separate.¹

At first glance there does not appear much to be gained by linking Apion's Homeric scholarship with his historical work: how precisely could his grammatical scholarship help with the understanding of the *Aegyptiaca*, and the other way round? And yet, upon reflection, I think there are two good reasons to look into the possibility of reading the one Apion together with the other. First, I think that we have an obligation to examine an ancient author on the basis of his entire corpus, even if we are focusing on a single work; and secondly, this is how Apion was viewed by others in antiquity. So, for instance, Pliny the Elder refers to him as Apion *grammaticus* (*HN praef.* 25; cf. 30.18), and yet clearly also knows the *Aegyptiaca* (e.g., *HN* 30.99, 36.79, 37.75); similarly, Aulus Gellius characterizes him as a man of letters, but at the same time also as an authority on the wonders of Egypt (5.14.1–4).²

Indeed, what I will attempt to show in this paper is that Josephus was not only critiquing Apion's account of the Jews from the *Aegyptiaca* in his own *Contra Apionem*, but was also commenting on Apion as a Homeric scholar. In fact, I think that Josephus was aware that much of Apion's fame was due to his lexical work, and in order to make his criticism succeed, Josephus mounted an attack on Apion's reputation as a *grammatikos* as well, even though it did not really concern his main target, namely, Apion's historical writing.

Much ink has been spilt on the various identifications connected with the name of Apion in antiquity: whether the epithet *πλειστονίκης* should be interpreted as “a

1. F. Jacoby, ed., *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, no. 616 (Leiden, 1958); K. Alpers, H. Erbse, and A. Kleinlogel, eds., *Sammlung griechischer und lateinischer Grammatiker*, vol. 3, *Apions Γλῶσσαι Ὅμηρικαι*, ed. S. Neitzel (Berlin, 1977).

2. The case for Gellius' knowledge of Apion is admittedly complex. He clearly knew him as a celebrated writer, and seems to have read the *Aegyptiaca*, and yet his reports of Apion's work consist entirely of marvels, and he does not seem to know him as a Homeric scholar: consult L. Holford-Strevens, *Aulus Gellius* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1988), 116, 170, 230.

victor in many contests” or as “quarrelsome,” and whether the famous inscription from the whistling statue of Memnon in Egypt is to be attributed to the scholar/historian.³ But what drew my attention in Josephus’ *Contra Apionem* is that, although the work takes as its purpose the refutation of part of Apion’s historical work, the *Aegyptiaca* (see esp. *Ap.* 2.6–7), throughout the crucial first section of Josephus’ treatment, Apion is referred to as ὁ γραμματικός. I take this to be highly significant. If we consider a parallel case, that of Hecataeus of Abdera, whom Josephus also discusses, a contrast of some significance emerges.

Hecataeus is an author of considerable importance to Josephus. Josephus treats Hecataeus’ *Peri Ioudaion* at great length in the first book of the *Contra Apionem*. Hecataeus wrote a lengthy *Aegyptiaca* that influenced several subsequent writers on Egypt, including Manetho, and doubtless also Apion. Notably, he also was a Homeric scholar. The *Suda* refers to him as “a *philosophos* who was also called a critical grammarian, inasmuch as he possessed grammatical learning. He lived during the time of the *diadochoi* [if γέγονε can be understood this way].⁴ These are his books, *On the Poetry of Homer and Hesiod*. . . .” At this point the entry seems to break off.⁵ Here is how Josephus introduces him: “Hecataeus of Abdera, a man at one time a *philosophos* and most competent in the affairs of state, flourished at the time of Alexander the king and was associated with Ptolemy son of Lagos. . . .”⁶ There is an obvious similarity between the *Suda* and Josephus: they both call him a *philosophos*, really meaning nothing more than “intellectual.” And yet, while the *Suda* also labels Hecataeus a *grammatikos*, Josephus does not, though in his literary output he resembles Apion almost exactly. But this sort of argument does not in the end get us very far. It is better to look at the positive evidence.

If we look at the entire corpus of Josephus, he uses the term *grammatikos* in the sense of “scholar” only four times: all occurrences are found in the second book of his *Contra Apionem*, and all describe Apion.⁷ And importantly, when we see Apion described as a *grammatikos*, Homer is often prominent in the discussion as well. Indeed, it is really only the first occurrence where Homer’s presence is not felt: Jo-

3. See, e.g., A. G. Sperling, *Apion der Grammatiker und sein Verhältnis zum Judentum: Ein Beitrag zu einer Einleitung in die Schriften des Josephus* (Dresden, 1886), vi; and H. Jacobson, “Apion’s Nickname,” *AJP* 98 (1977): 413–15. For the whistling statue of Memnon, upon which is inscribed Ἀπίων πλειστον[ικης] ἤκουσα τρίς, see A. and E. Bernand, *Les Inscriptions grecques et latines du colosse de Memnon*, Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 31 (Cairo, 1960), 165. Cf. G. Bowersock, “The Miracle of Memnon,” *BASP* 21 (1984): 21–32, later published in his *Studies on the Eastern Roman Empire* (Goldbach, 1994), 253–64.

4. It has been argued that such forms of γίγνομαι indicate dates of birth rather than flourits: see E. Rohde, “Γέγονε in den Biographica des Suidas,” in his *Kleine Schriften* (Tübingen and Leipzig, 1901), 1:114–84, first published in *RhM* 33 (1878): 161–220, 638, and *RhM* 34 (1879): 620–22; A. Mosshammer, “The Epoch of the Seven Sages,” *CSCA* 9 (1976): p. 173 and n. 26.

5. *FGrH* 264 T 1 = *Suda*, s.v.: Ἐκαταῖος Ἀβδηρίτης φιλόσοφος, ὃς ἐπεκλήθη καὶ κριτικός γραμματικός, οἷα γραμματικὴν ἔχων παρασκευὴν. γέγονε δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν διαδόχων. βιβλία αὐτοῦ ταῦτα. Περὶ τῆς ποιήσεως Ὁμήρου καὶ Ἡσιόδου. . . . On the terminology involved, see R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginning to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford, 1968), 157–58 and 253; R. Nicolai, *La storiografia nell’educazione antica* (Pisa, 1992), 178–86; and P. Parsons, “Identities in Diversity,” in *Images and Ideologies*, ed. A. W. Bulloch et al. (Berkeley, 1993), 156–57; cf. J. Dillery, “Hecataeus of Abdera: Hyperboreans, Egypt, and the *Interpretatio Graeca*,” *Historia* 47 (1998): 255–56. Jacoby argues that Ister (*FGrH* 334) is called a *syngrapheus* and not a *grammatikos* because the ancients differentiated between historians and more literary figures such as Callimachus; see *FGrH* 3b 619.

6. Joseph. *Ap.* 1.183 = *FGrH* 264 T 7: Ἐκαταῖος δὲ ὁ Ἀβδηρίτης, ἀνὴρ φιλόσοφος ἦμα καὶ περὶ τὰς πράξεις ἱκανώτατος, Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τῷ βασιλεῖ συνακμάσας καὶ Πτολεμαίῳ τῷ Λάγῳ συγγενόμενος.

7. Cf. K. H. Rengstorff, ed., *A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus* (Leiden, 1973), s.v. γραμματικός.

sephus states that he intends to proceed with his refutation of Gentile authors who have misrepresented the Jews, but wonders whether the work of Apion the *grammatikos* is even worth a response, being so shot full with absurd claims and signs of profound ignorance (*Ap.* 2.2).

We learn from Josephus' first quotation from Apion's *Aegyptiaca* that the historian obtained his information about Moses from the oral reports of older Egyptians. Josephus pounces on the notion that older Egyptians would have anything reliable to say about Moses. "Such is the amazing statement of the *grammatikos*," Josephus observes, and then a little later in the same context, he says again, "*grammatikos* though he is, even about the poet Homer, what his homeland was, he would not be able to say for certain, nor about Pythagoras who lived not yesterday perhaps but the day before; but about Moses, who preceeded these men by such a vast number of years, he offers so easily his opinion, relying on the hearsay of older men, and so reveals himself to be a liar" (*Ap.* 2.12, 14).⁸ Evidently, according to Josephus, while Apion could date Moses with relative ease, he could not place or date Homer or Pythagoras. While Josephus would seem to have a strong case, what underlies his criticism here of Apion is the fact that the dating and placement of Homer's birth had been scholarly questions for some time in the Greek world. The birthplace of Homer had of course been debated since the Archaic period.⁹ As for the date, Herodotus linked the period of Homer and Hesiod to the beginning of Greek knowledge of the gods, in language strikingly similar to what Josephus employs at *Contra Apionem* 2.14: "but it was only—if I may so put it—the day before yesterday that the Greeks came to know the origin and form of the various gods, and whether or not all of them had always existed; for Homer and Hesiod are the poets who composed theogonies and described the gods of the Greeks . . . and they lived not more than four hundred years ago" (*Hdt.* 2.53.1–2, trans. de Sélincourt).¹⁰ The similarity in language between Josephus' critique of Apion and Herodotus' statement makes one pause. The phrase "only the day before yesterday" (ἐχθὲς καὶ πρόην) is regularly employed by Greek authors when discussing early human history, especially the origin of poetry (cf. *Pl. Leg.* 677d); typically, a more remote period is compared to the relatively recent Greek discovery of literary forms. It is, in other words, drawn very much from the world of Greek literary criticism.¹¹ This is highly significant. It is Apion the *grammatikos* that is under attack in these chapters of Josephus, and in particular, Apion the scholar of Homer, not so much Apion the historian.

The claim that Apion the Homeric scholar is in fact being critiqued in *Ap.* 2.12–14 dovetails in interesting ways with a piece of testimony offered by Pliny the Elder.

8. Joseph. *Ap.* 2.12–14, cf. *FGrH* 616 F 1: τοιαύτη μὲν τις ἡ θαυμαστὴ τοῦ γραμματικοῦ φράσις . . . καὶ περὶ μὲν Ὁμήρου τοῦ ποιητοῦ γραμματικὸς ὢν αὐτὸς οὐκ ἂν ἔχοι, τίς αὐτοῦ πατρίς ἐστι, διαβεβαιωσάμενος εἰπεῖν, οὐδὲ περὶ Πυθαγόρου μόνον οὐκ ἔχθες καὶ πρόην γεγονότος, περὶ δὲ Μωσέως τοσοῦτῃ πλήθει προάγοντος ἐκείνους ἐτῶν οὕτως ἀποφαίνεται ῥᾱδίως, πιστεύων ἀκοῇ πρεσβυτέρων, ὥς δῆλός ἐστι καταφυσάμενος.

9. On the birthplace of Homer, see, e.g., *Hymn Hom.* *Ap.* 172–73 and Semonides frag. 29 Diehl: Chios; Pindar frag. 264 Maehler: Smyrna. Cf. *Certamen Homeri et Hesiodi* 7–17 Allen.

10. *Hdt.* 2.53.1–2: ὅθεν δὲ ἐγένοντο ἕκαστος τῶν θεῶν, εἴτε αἰεὶ ἦσαν πάντες, ὅκοιοί τε τινες τὰ εἶδεα, οὐκ ἠπιστάτο μέχρι οὗ πρόην τε καὶ χθὲς ὥς εἰπεῖν λόγῳ. Ἡσίοδον γὰρ καὶ Ὁμηρον ἡλικίην τετρακοσίοισι ἔτεσι δοκῶ μεν πρεσβυτέρους γενέσθαι καὶ οὐ πλέοσι. οὗτοι δὲ εἰσι οἱ ποιήσαντες θεογονίην "Ελλῆσι . . . καὶ εἶδεα αὐτῶν σημῖναντες.

11. Often even cases where the idiom seems not to have a literary critical importance turn out precisely to do so: e.g., Demosthenes, *De Cor.* 130, where he is attacking Aeschines' background as an orator.

The passage is worth quoting in full: "Apion, renowned for his grammatical knowledge, appeared to me when I was young and revealed to me that the herb *cynocephalia*, which in Egypt is called *osiritis*, is divinatory and an antidote against all poisons, but, if entirely uprooted, immediately the uprooter is killed; and he said that he had called up the shades to ask Homer where his homeland was and who were his parents, but that he did not dare to reveal what he said Homer responded to him" (*HN* 30.18).¹² Pliny's statement suggests that he had a personal encounter with Apion—indeed *visus* in the context resonates oddly with the summoning of shades—during which Apion related orally his own meeting with the ghost of Homer. I note too that we see quite prominently the identification of Apion as a *grammatikos* (of course here a man of *grammatica ars*). The anecdote admittedly seems to relate to a claim made *viva voce* and in person, not in a text Pliny read. But if the view represented here corresponds in any way to what Josephus reports in the *Contra Apionem*, we are presented with a problem as well as a number of possibilities.

I find it inconceivable that if Apion claimed to have knowledge of Homer's birthplace, but did not divulge it on the grounds that it was a kind of sacred knowledge transmitted to him by a ghost of Homer, Josephus would not have let loose with an even greater torrent of abuse than he does: old men as a source are one thing, but a ghost, quite another. On the other hand, Josephus does ridicule Apion for trusting those old men as if they were Moses' contemporaries. It may be that Josephus has misunderstood Apion, or, more likely, that Apion may have reported one thing in the *Aegyptiaca*, and perhaps presented a more extravagant version in the presence of Pliny. It is also possible that the two passages, Josephus' criticism and Pliny's reminiscence, should not be connected at all. But be that as it may, I find it quite telling that in both passages, Egypt and Homer intersect. Josephus' quotation must come from the *Aegyptiaca*, for it is difficult to imagine a discussion of Moses and his origins anywhere else in his admittedly large and varied corpus.¹³ And yet Josephus' analysis of it includes the reference to Apion's reluctance to reveal Homer's birthplace: would this have been from the *Aegyptiaca* too? It is possible of course, but there is another, more logical candidate from Apion's corpus: the *Glossai Homerikai*. Would not such a discussion perhaps find a better place in a work of Homeric scholarship? Even though the form (*glossai*) would not appear to be a place for extensive discussion,¹⁴ the genre permitted Apion more discursive moments too: Neitzel fragments 46, 57, 86, and 93, for example, are also found in Jacoby's *FGrH* (frags. 42, 43, 45, 52 respectively).¹⁵ My point is that while there is no doubt uncertainty in distributing the fragments between his historical work and the *Glossai Homerikai*, this very situation reflects the fact that even if we were to remove

12. Plin., *HN* 30.18: "adulescentibus nobis visus Apion grammaticae artis prodiderit cynocephalian herbam, quae in Aegypto vocaretur osiritis, divinam et contra omnia veneficia, sed si tota erueretur, statim eum qui eruisset mori, seque evocasse umbras ad percunctandum Homerum quam patria quibusque parentibus genitus esset, non tamen ausus profiteri quid sibi respondisse diceret." On the miraculous *osiritis*, cf. Diod. Sic. 1.17.5, and consult A. Burton, *Diodorus Siculus Book I: A Commentary* (Leiden, 1972), 82 ad loc. This is a text that may derive from Hecataeus of Abdera.

13. See, e.g., H. Gärtner, "Apion," in *Kl. Pauly* 1 (Munich, 1979), 432, for a list of titles; in addition to his *Aegyptiaca* and *Glossai Homerikai* it is claimed that he wrote a work on Apicius, a treatise entitled *Peri magou*, and also one *On the Speech of the Romans*, as well as *On Elements* and on *Metallica disciplina*. This last title is almost certainly a phantom work.

14. On *Glossai*, see Pfeiffer, *History* (n. 5 above), 12, 41.

15. Cf. C. Theodoridis, "Drei neue Fragmente des Grammatikers Apion," *RhM* 132 (1989): 345–50.

some of the more questionable fragments from the *Glossai*, elements in the remains of Apion's grammatical work create the impression that it had considerable narrative portions.

Having dealt with Apion's treatment of Moses' origins, Josephus turns to a critique of Apion's dating of the Exodus. He states with heavy irony that surely "the accurate grammarian" (ὁ γραμματικὸς ὁ ἀκριβής, *Ap.* 2.15) would be in agreement with his illustrious predecessors; he then goes on to report that Manetho, Lysimachus, and others came up with dates in the remote past, whereas Apion, the most reliable of all (πάντων πιστότατος), places the event in the first year of the seventh Olympiad, contemporary with the foundation of Carthage. Such a date not only conflicts with those proposed by his predecessors, who all put the Exodus considerably earlier, it also provides Josephus with an opening for his own attack. Noting that on the basis of Phoenician records King Hirom antedated the foundation of Carthage by 150 years, and yet was also a contemporary of Solomon, who lived of course centuries after the Exodus, Josephus can argue that Apion has refuted himself: he observes with some relish that "Apion doubtless inserted this mention of Carthage in the belief that it would afford a most striking proof of his veracity; he has failed to see that he has thereby brought upon himself his own refutation" (*Ap.* 2.17).¹⁶ It is certainly true that elsewhere in the *Contra Apionem* Josephus employs a similar strategy in his review of other historians (for example, Manetho, *Ap.* 1.267),¹⁷ but given the proximity of this statement to his discussion of Apion and Homer, it is tempting to wonder if his remark has an additional force here, and if he is modifying a basic and well-known principle of Homeric criticism in his treatment of this famous Homeric scholar: not to make clear Apion from Apion, but to find those places where the author refutes himself.¹⁸ Although I would not want to press this point, we may indeed have another case where the term *grammatikos* is prominent in a section that also contains an allusion perhaps to the scholarly treatment of Homer.

Josephus next criticizes Apion for specific details relating to the Exodus itself. I believe that this is another section in which we see him attack not just Apion the author of the *Aegyptiaca*, but also Apion the Homeric scholar. We learn from yet another long direct quotation that Apion alleges that by the seventh day of their journey the Jews had reached Judaea, but had decided to stop anyway because they had developed swellings or tumors in the groin. Apion goes on to explain that this cause for the day of rest is commemorated in the word *sabbaton*, because the Egyptian word for a swelling of the groin is *sabbo* (*Ap.* 2.21).¹⁹ Josephus attacks this account from a number of angles, but he reserves his most stinging abuse for Apion's bizarre

16. Joseph. *Ap.* 2.17: τοῦτο δὲ πάντως προσέθηκε τὸ Καρχηδὼνα τεκμήριον οἰόμενος αὐτῷ γενέσθαι τῆς ἀληθείας ἐναργέστατον, οὐ συνήκε δὲ καθ' ἑαυτοῦ τὸν ἐλεγχον ἐπισπώμενος.

17. For this method of critique in the *Contra Apionem*, see M. Goodman, "Josephus' Treatise Against Apion," in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, ed. M. Edwards, M. Goodman, and S. Price (Oxford, 1999), 51–52. Cf. J. Dillery, "The First Egyptian Narrative History: Manetho and Greek Historiography," *ZPE* 127 (1999): p. 94 and n. 6.

18. Apion from Apion = making clear Homer from Homer: "Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν, associated in antiquity with Aristarchus, but not necessarily in this formulation by Porphyry. Cf. Pfeiffer, *History*, 227.

19. Joseph. *Ap.* 2.21 = *FGrH* 616 F 4b: οὐδὲσαντες γάρ, φησὶν, ἐξ ἡμερῶν ὁδὸν βουβῶνας ἔσχον, καὶ διὰ ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀνεπαύσαντο, σωθέντες εἰς τὴν χώραν τὴν νῦν Ἰουδαίαν λεγομένην, καὶ ἐκάλεσαν τὴν ἡμέραν σάββατον, σώζοντες τὴν Αἰγυπτίων γλῶτταν· τὸ γὰρ βουβῶνος ἄλγος καλοῦσιν Αἰγύπτῳ σαββά.

etymology of “sabbath”: the incredible Apion (θαυμαστὸς Ἀπίων) has produced an incredible explanation (θαυμαστὴν . . . αἰτίαν). On the obvious grounds that the Hebrew word means “cessation of work” and has nothing to do with Egyptian *sabbo*, Josephus claims that the shift in spelling (γραμματική μετάθεσις) that this etymology of *sabbaton* (τὴν ὀνομασίαν τοῦ σαββάτου) entails reveals either Apion’s great shamelessness or his gross ignorance (ἀναιδέϊαν πολλὴν ἢ δεινὴν ἀμαθίαν *Ap.* 2.26). The technical nature of Josephus’ evaluation of Apion’s etymology is worth remembering. And, curiously, he will return to the idea of Apion and afflictions of the groin again towards the end of his treatise, when he reports that Apion himself died after a botched therapeutic circumcision (*Ap.* 2.143). This notice also forms the conclusion of his discussion of Apion. Josephus seems almost to delight in this detail,²⁰ and it makes one wonder if in fact he viewed Apion’s painful demise as an answer to the grammarian’s absurd explanation for *sabbaton*.

Josephus’ rejection of the etymology of *sabbaton* forms something of a capstone to the first part of his critique of Apion. Indeed, in the very next sentence he observes that “such are the innovations that Apion the Egyptian made regarding Moses and the departure of the Jews from Egypt” (*Ap.* 2.28).²¹ It is important to note that the identification here of Apion as an Egyptian is probably meant to underscore his distance from Greek authors who wrote on Egypt. And although the attack will continue for another hundred sections or so, the analysis becomes much more rambling, and the references to Apion become opportunities to talk about other matters rather than the *Aegyptiaca*.²² Indeed, we ought to remember in this context that we do not in fact know the original title of the *Contra Apionem*,²³ and that this description raises expectations that the work will be chiefly a response to Apion, which it is not. With the exception of the notorious description of the ritual murder of a Greek annually by the Jews, preserved only in a Latin translation from the time of Theoderic, there are no more lengthy quotations from his work.²⁴ I think, therefore, it is fair to characterize *Contra Apionem* 2.2–28 as something of a unit, and of course it is precisely here that the references to Apion as *grammatikos* cluster.

At one level the unity of this portion of Josephus’ criticism of Apion is due to the focus on Moses (namely his date), as well as the Exodus (its date, the number of people involved, and other details). The Exodus was clearly the most important event in Jewish history for both the Jews themselves and those Gentile writers who chose to write about them. But it is the critique of Apion’s etymology of *sabbaton* that suggests to me that there is another, not necessarily competing reason, for the unity of this portion of the *Contra Apionem*: it is here that Apion the Homeric scholar is being attacked as well, Apion ὁ γραμματικός.

20. Goodman, “Treatise Against Apion” (n. 17 above), 54. In general, see A. J. Pomeroy, *The Appropriate Comment: Death Notices in the Ancient Historians* (Frankfurt, 1991); he does not discuss our passage.

21. Joseph. *Ap.* 2.28: τοιαῦτα μὲν τινα περὶ Μωσέως καὶ τῆς ἐξ Αἰγύπτου γενομένης τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἀπαλλαγῆς ὁ Αἰγύπτιος Ἀπίων ἐκαινοποίησεν. . . .

22. Cf. E. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley, 1998), 67–68.

23. Goodman, “Treatise Against Apion,” 45.

24. Ritual murder of a Greek annually by the Jews: *Ap.* 2.91–96. Cf. E. Bickerman, “Ritualmord und Eselskult,” in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* (Leiden, 1980), 2:225–55, first published in *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 81 (1927): 171–87. This notorious passage too may suggest the intersection of Apion the historian and Apion the *grammatikos*: H. Jacobson, “Apion, the Jews, and Human Sacrifice,” *CQ* 51 (2001): 218–19, has speculated that the imagery in the passage may derive from Euripides’ *Iphigeneia among the Taurians*.

Marchinus Van der Valk noted some time ago that it is in the nature of Homeric glossaries that they preserve a number of individual and competing explanations.²⁵ But it needs also to be said that usually there is a fairly well-defined semantic field that is explored by different glossators over time, with individual scholars offering subtly different interpretations of Homeric terms. Even granting, however, that variety is typical of Homeric glossaries, it is clear that Apion was wildly deviant. Let us look at one especially illuminating case. In line 6 of Book 13 of the *Iliad* occurs the ethnic Abioi, a people of the Thraceward area by whom Zeus is temporarily distracted; they are spoken of as the most just of men. Apollonius Sophista, who preserves several of Apion's etymologies in his own Homeric glossary, has the following entry for the name: "On the one hand Aristarchus understands that it is a people who are so called either because they live justly through abstaining from violence or because they do not possess a normally bounded life. Apion, on the other hand, [believes the Abioi are so called] because they live communally and in like manner with each other, or because they lack the necessities of life."²⁶ Aristarchus relies on the interpretation *alpha* privative and *bia*, or *alpha* privative and *bios*. Evidently in "unbounded life" he understands that the Abioi are long-lived or even immortal. Apion also offers an explanation that incorporates *alpha* privative, but he first advances an etymology that relies on the much less common *alpha athroistikon*.²⁷ Michael Haslam has recently observed that, even allowing for the probability that Apollonius chose Apion's more idiosyncratic etymologies, his explanation for Abioi, and others like it, reveal Apion as a scholar who "specialized in contriving novel etymologies for much-discussed words, almost as if to show it is a game that anyone can play."²⁸

This observation could equally well be made of Apion's etymology for *sabbaton* from his *Aegyptiaca*. We know that the sabbath excited a great deal of comment from Gentile authors, and it is certainly true that the mistaken connection of it to the commemoration of the Exodus can be paralleled in other writers (Pompeius Trogus/Justin 36.2.14–15).²⁹ But to my knowledge the etymology that Apion advances is unique. While I would not want to challenge the position that the main target for Josephus' attack is the *Aegyptiaca*,³⁰ it should I think be clear that he had his eye on other of Apion's works as well. Although the explanation for *sabbaton* surely came from the *Aegyptiaca*, its prominence in that part of the *Contra Apionem* which also seems to stress Apion as *grammatikos* makes me wonder if Josephus did not see an advantage in engaging in polemic not only with Apion the anti-Semitic historian, but also with Apion the famous and eccentric Homeric scholar. Recall, too, that he criticized the famous grammarian for being out of step with other Gentile historians

25. M. van der Valk, *Researches on the Text and Scholia of the Iliad* (Leiden, 1963), 1:229.

26. *Il.* 13.6: Ἀβίων τε δικαιοτάτων ἀνθρώπων. Apion, *Glossai Homerikai* F 4 (Neitzel) = Apollonius Sophista 3.16: ΑΒΙΩΝ. ὁ μὲν Ἀριστάρχος ὡς ἔθνους οὕτω λεγομένου ἀκούει . . . ἢ ὡς δικαίως βιούντων κατὰ στέρησιν τῆς βίας, ἢ τῶν ὀρίσμενον βίον οὐκ ἔχόντων. . . ὁ δὲ Ἀπίων ἦτοι κοινῶς καὶ ὁμοίως βιούντων, ἢ τοῖς βίοις ἐλλειπόντων.

27. Cf. Neitzel ad loc.

28. M. W. Haslam, "The Homer Lexicon of Apollonius Sophista. I: Composition and Constituents," *CP* 89 (1994): p. 28, n. 83.

29. Cf. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism* (n. 22 above), 47–48; also H.-D. Richter, *Untersuchungen zur hellenistischen Historiographie: Die Vorlage des Pompeius Trogus für die Darstellung der nachalexandrischen hellenistischen Geschichte* (Iust. 13–40) (Frankfurt, 1987), 172–75.

30. See, e.g., M. Goodman, in Schürer's *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC–AD 135)*, ed. G. Vermes, F. Millar, and M. Goodman (Edinburgh, 1986), 3.1: 605–6.

in dating the Exodus: in his historical writing and his Homeric scholarship, Apion, it seems, advocated deviant positions. There was a real advantage for Josephus in bringing up the Homeric scholar while he was disputing with the historian. For if, as it seems, Apion the *grammatikos* was notorious for idiosyncratic and largely unreliable etymologies of Homeric terms, this reputation would help undermine his authority as a historian as well, especially if his unreliability were signaled early on in the treatment of him, as it in fact is.³¹

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31. This paper was first delivered in the spring of 2002 at the University of Virginia at a conference held to mark the retirement of Edward Courtney. It is a pleasure to repeat my thanks and good wishes to him here. I would also like to thank C. Damon for her comments on an earlier draft.