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On the Origin of the Jewish Historian Artapanus

Meron Piotrkowski

Abstract: This article explores the possibility that the Jewish historian Artapanus may have come from Teucheria in Cyrenaica. The argument is based on onomastic patterns in epigraphy. The name Artapanus (and its derivatives) is not documented much elsewhere in the Hellenistic-Roman orbit (only 16 times) and *all* its occurrences from the entire ancient *Jewish* Diaspora derive from Teucheria, where the name is attested an astonishing seven times — the eighth belonging to Artapanus, the historian — in funerary epitaphs discovered in burial courts with a high concentration of Jewish tombs. This finding is suggestive and if correct, Artapanus would thus join the ranks of another famous Jewish author of Cyrenian origin, namely Jason of Cyrene. Artapanus' Cyrenian origin, moreover, would explain the Egyptian setting of his writings and his familiarity with native Egyptians, their customs and religion, since the Cyrenaica was part of the Ptolemaic/Egyptian orbit.

Keywords: Artapanus; Epigraphy; Onomastics; Egyptian-Jewish Diaspora; Cyrenaica

Introduction

There is very little we know about the ancient Jewish historian Artapanus. For example, the precise date of Artapanus' *floruit* remains disputed, although a date ranging from 250-100 BCE is commonly assumed in modern scholarship.¹ More recently, H. Jacobson even contested his Jewishness,² based mainly on the assumption that a Jewish author would hardly speak so favorably about Egyptians and their customs and deviate so coarsely from the biblical *Vorlage* in numerous instances, including the jarring note that Moses introduced the Egyptians to the animal cult.³ However, deviations from the Bible, as Jacobson himself admits,⁴ are not cogent arguments against the Jewish

¹ Artapanus' writings were preserved by Alexander Polyhistor (ca. 50 BCE), thus determining a *terminus ad quem* for them. See e.g. Holladay (1977), 199-232; Holladay (1983), 189-190; Barclay (1996), 127, 446; Collins (2000), 39. For a later dating, namely 150-100 BCE, see Collins (1985), 2:890-891 and Flusser and Amorai-Stark (1993-1994), 225. Recently, the case has been convincingly made for dating Artapanus' work to the period of civil unrest in Egypt under Ptolemy VIII Physcon, see Zellentin (2008), 27-73. See also Collins (2010), 62, 66; Kugler (2005), 69.

² For the claim that Artapanus was a pagan, see Jacobson (2006), 210-221 and the literature cited there (213, n. 11), summarizing the evolution of the debate on Artapanus' Jewishness. Fraser (1972), 1:706; 2:985 (n. 199) argues that Artapanus was a Jew of mixed descent on account of his Persian name. See on the issue also Holladay (1977), 201-204.

³ See Artapanus, Frag. 3 (Eusebius *Praep. Ev.* 9.27.4, 12) in Holladay (1983) 211-213.

⁴ Jacobson (2006), 213.

background of the author; after all, there is an entire genre of Jewish re-written biblical texts that freely add, embellish and depart from the Bible. In addition, non-Jews may hardly have taken an interest in the Bible/Septuagint, and it seems awkward that a non-Jewish author would exhibit such a profound interest in Jews and Jewish history and would compose an entire treatise based on the lives of the patriarchs — the more so, considering that no comparable works of that sort by Gentile authors are known to us.⁵ While Artapanus' accounts of the patriarchs are, indeed, quite extraordinary and somewhat “daring”, it strikes me as far too simplistic to argue that precisely this notion should form the basis for the assumption that they stem from the quill of a non-Jew, as Jacobson suggests.⁶ His approach, we note with Collins, undermines Artapanus' apologetic intention, conveying to his Jewish (and perhaps also non-Jewish) readers that the Jews benefit(ed) the Egyptians, thus seeking to aggrandize the Jews in the eyes of the Gentiles.⁷ In all, Jacobson's arguments are not persuasive and, to my mind, do not impugn Artapanus' Jewishness.

In the context of the debate about Artapanus' Jewish origin, the argument that he did not even bear a Jewish name is often brought forward as well. True, the name “Artapanus” is Persian, but there is ample evidence for (Egyptian) Jews bearing Persian names.⁸ By swinging the pendulum to the opposite side, it has been argued that Artapanus was a descendant of the Jewish community of the Elephantine Temple, which was founded during the Persian Period.⁹ Whether or not this is true, cannot be substantiated and is, in fact, to be doubted.

Artapanus' descent is of concern in this article. The majority of scholars agree that he did not come from Alexandria.¹⁰ Some have suggested that he came from a location somewhere in the Egyptian *chora*, but from where specifically remains a mystery.¹¹ There is, however, one hint to his origins, and that is his name. A recent study by S. Honigman, which serves as a model for our purposes here, shows that various Jewish communities in Egypt, in particular those from Upper Egypt (but not exclusively), which were founded during the Persian period, retained their onomastic identity, i.e., their preference for names popular in the Persian period, at least up to the early 2nd century

⁵ See also Collins (2010), 61.

⁶ Jacobson (2006), 216.

⁷ See above, n. 5.

⁸ On Persian names borne by Jews during the Hellenistic period, see Honigman (2003), 63-118, and Honigman (2009), 121. Collins finds Artapanus' name “obscure”, see Collins (2010), 62. Zellentin argues that “Artapanus” is a pen-name in order to convey impartiality; see Zellentin (2008) 28 (n. 7).

⁹ Meyer (1912), 28.

¹⁰ Barclay (1996), 127-128, Collins (2000), 39; Koskenniemi (2002), 23, provides arguments to rule out an Alexandrian provenance of Artapanus.

¹¹ Kugler suggested that Artapanus wrote in the vicinity of Memphis, because of his “intense interest in Egyptian religious traditions”. Kugler (2005), 69 and there, n. 4; see also Fraser (1972), 2:985 (n. 199). Since it is generally believed that Artapanus provides a reference to the Temple of Onias, Hengel suggested that Artapanus originated from Leontopolis, cf., Hengel (1971), 239. We argue with Collins ([2000], 30 [n. 50]) that nothing in particular ties him to either Alexandria, Memphis, or Leontopolis.

BCE.¹² A case in point is the Jewish community of Edfu, which, according to papyrological evidence was founded in the Persian period and retained in the Ptolemaic period an array of names that were popular in the earlier one. What is more, the Aramaic papyri attest to Jewish judges and priests from Edfu, apparently stationed at a fortress, which suggests a military background of that community, similar to what we know about the Jewish community of Elephantine.¹³ Therefore, it seems likely that Artapanus, as suggested by E. Meyer, may have had his origins in a Jewish community of mercenaries that was established during the late Persian, or early Ptolemaic period.¹⁴

In the pursuit of Artapanus' origin, I propose, that insight may be derived from some funerary epitaphs from Teucheria in Cyrenaica (modern-day Libya),¹⁵ where the name Artapanus, or rather Artaphan/Artaphantos (Ἀρτάφαν/Ἀρτάφαντος), is attested an astonishing seven times.¹⁶ The name (and its derivatives: Artaphan; Artaphantos; Artapanos; Artabanos; Artaban[n]es) is not documented much elsewhere in the Hellenistic-Roman orbit — only 16 times.¹⁷ Remarkably, *all* its occurrences from the entire ancient Jewish Diaspora derive from Teucheria.¹⁸ The only other known occurrence of the name (the eighth), belongs to our historian.¹⁹ This peculiar fact merits scrutiny.

¹² See Honigman (2009), 120.

¹³ See *TAD* D1.17 and *TAD* C3.28 in Porten and Yardeni (1986-1999) and Honigman (2009), 122-123.

¹⁴ See above, n. 9.

¹⁵ See Applebaum (1961), 27-52.

¹⁶ See also Ilan (2008), 623-624 (entry “Ἀρτάπανος”).

¹⁷ With the exception of the attestations of the name Artapanus in Teucheria, the name occurs elsewhere in the Hellenistic-Roman world: It is recorded (spelled Ἀρτάφαν) twice more in the Cyrenaica: once in Barka-Ptolemais and once in Cyrene (dated 1st cent. BCE/1st cent. CE). The latter inscription, however, is partly reconstructed and thus its attestation is quite uncertain; see Fraser and Mathews (1987), 81. It also occurs in an inscription from Sicily from the 3rd-4th cent. CE (Ἀρτάφαντος; see Fraser and Mathews [1997], 72). An Ἀρτάβανος is recorded in a 2nd cent. CE (110 CE) inscription from Cilicia Pedias (Anazarbos); see Fraser and Mathews (2013), 61. Further occurrences (Ἀρτάβανος) are from Syria (in a 1st/2nd cent. CE inscription from Palmyra [*JGLS* XVII (1) 532-3]; and from Antioch in the context of the 2nd cent. CE, mentioned in the *Chronicon Paschale* P 490 line 9); Armenia (Ἀρταβάνης; from 4th cent. CE [Amm. Marc. xxvii 12. 5 ff.]; the 5th cent. CE [Justi p. 32 no. 16]; Ἀρταβάνης from the 6th century [*PLRE* III nos. 1 and 2]); from Persia (Ἀρτάβανος): 6th cent. BCE (Hdt. vii 75); 6th-5th cent. BCE (Dareios' brother; Hdt. iv 83); 5th cent. BCE (*FGrHist* 688 F 14.30; although spelled here Ἀρτάπανος); 5th cent. BCE (*FGrHist* 688 F 14.31); 3rd cent. CE (I. Estremo Oriente 261, 63 monument of Shapur I); from Parthia: 1st cent. BCE/1st cent. CE (*PIR* A 1155); 1st cent. CE (in Tac., Ann xi 8 [*PIR* A 1156]); 1st cent. CE (*PIR* A 1157); 2nd/3rd cent. CE (*PIR* A 1158). I am much grateful to Prof. Robert Parker and Richard Catling for these yet unpublished references. As this overview goes to show, the name Artapanus (and its derivatives) originated in the Persian Empire and spread to countries that had come under Persian domination.

¹⁸ The name is also not recorded in Judaea.

¹⁹ That is no. 1 in Ilan (2008), 623.

The Cemetery of Teucheria

The site of ancient Teucheria (also known as Tauchira and Teuchira/Arsinoë, modern-day Tocra) lies on the Mediterranean coast ca. 70 km north-east of modern Benghazi (Euesperides/Berenice).²⁰ In the wake of the Macedonian Conquest of Egypt, which ended the Persian domination of the region, Cyrenaica came under Ptolemaic rule in 322.²¹ After the Ptolemaic governor Magas attempted to establish himself as the autocratic ruler of Cyrenaica in 283 BCE, and after a failed attempt to invade Egypt in 274 BCE,²² the region was to be reunified with Egypt in 260 BCE as part of a marital arrangement between Magas' daughter Berenice and Ptolemy II Philadelphus' son, Ptolemy III Euergetes.²³ After Magas' death the reunification of the Cyrenaica with Egypt was sabotaged by Magas' widow, Apame, and the marriage was cancelled.²⁴ However, further negotiations eventually made possible the marriage on the accession to the throne of Euergetes in 246 BCE. This allowed Euergetes to regain control of the Cyrenaica. He renamed Taucheria *Arsinoë*, after his stepmother Arsinoe II, and the city became one of the five cities of the Cyrenaican Pentapolis.²⁵ During the Roman civil wars, the city was briefly renamed Cleopatris, as part of Marc Anthony's effort to honor his wife Cleopatra VII. In the later Roman period, the city received the rank of *colonia*.²⁶

The ancient city of Teucheria has not been extensively excavated, but its exploration has revealed the structure of an artificial harbour.²⁷ Excavations also revealed the ancient city's cemeteries, which were located within former quarries, housing a multitude of rock-cut chambers inscribed with hundreds of Greek inscriptions. The inscriptions were carved either on the façades of the quarries, inside the chambers, or on loose gravestones.²⁸ Some of the inscriptions are dated; they display the date of death, the name of the deceased, the name of his father, and the age at death. Ancient Egyptian months were used in some of the inscriptions, others bear dates related to an era starting from the Battle of Actium (31 BCE), or the reign of a certain Roman emperor — many times without specifying which emperor is meant.²⁹ The personal names of the deceased give insight into the origin of those laid to rest in the tombs and, in some cases, their religion. A large number were Roman, Cyrenaian (Libyan) or Jewish and their religions varied from paganism to Judaism and Christianity.³⁰

²⁰ See Boardman and Hayes (1966).

²¹ Kenrick (with a Contribution by A. Buzaian) (2013), 4. For a further brief historical overview, see Applebaum, (1961), 27-29.

²² See Hölbl (2004), 36-37, 61.

²³ Ibid., 43-44.

²⁴ Ibid., 44.

²⁵ Hölbl (2004), 46; Kenrick (2013), 4 and Applebaum (1961), 27.

²⁶ Buzaian in Kenrick (2013), 49.

²⁷ Buzaian in Kenrick (2013), 49, 51.

²⁸ Ibid., 51-52 and Applebaum (1961), 34.

²⁹ Lüderitz (1983), XII; and Applebaum (1961), 31-32.

³⁰ Buzaian in Kenrick (2013), 52.

The Jewish Inscriptions from Teucheria

The quarries of Teucheria played an important role as a source of building stone, but once they fell out of use, they were transformed into (rock-cut) tomb-complexes, a common practice in the coastal cities of Cyrenaica. Over 30 quarries extending alongside the coast on the Eastern and Western sides of the city containing such rock-cut tomb-chambers have been discovered.³¹

Since the majority of funerary inscriptions from the cemetery of Teucheria do not feature any characteristics indicating Jewishness (such as *Menoroth*), the only clear-cut indicator for the ethnicity/religion of the deceased are (Jewish) names.³² This also disallows the identification of further inscriptions as Jewish, since not all Jews bore Jewish names, but preferred non-Jewish (Greek and other) names — a common phenomenon in the Jewish Diaspora.³³ The fact that many of the tombs were rock-cut, in and of itself, can be an additional tool in identifying which tomb belonged to Jews and which to non-Jews,³⁴ because it is likely that, if one of the members of a family interred in a given tomb was Jewish (based on a Jewish name), so too were the others buried there.³⁵

It is close to impossible to provide an accurate estimate of how many of the overall number of tombs at the cemeteries of Teucheria were Jewish: of the hundreds of inscriptions discovered at the site, Lüderitz considered 28 Jewish, and Reynolds identified approximately 80 more, either as Jewish or as potentially Jewish.³⁶

Many of these inscriptions are dated, most of them from the Roman period (until 115 CE), and only rarely does one encounter tombs from an earlier period. Even rarer is the evidence for the post-Diaspora revolt period, i.e., from 117 CE onwards.³⁷

³¹ Ibid.

³² Applebaum noted the occurrence of *Menoroth* in some of the inscriptions, possibly one in cave II and another in a tomb of the Western Quarry, although he claimed that the large majority of Jews were buried in the Eastern Quarry; see Applebaum (1961), 34, 41; see also Lüderitz (1983), XI, 67. Lüderitz further notes the interesting fact that the Jews of Cyrenaica used the local Doric dialect, which is evident in the many Doric forms used in the inscriptions (ibid., XI).

³³ See also Applebaum (1961), 35 and Lüderitz (1983), XI.

³⁴ Buzaian in Kenrick (2013), 52.

³⁵ This method was also noted by Applebaum (1961), 30.

³⁶ See Lüderitz (1983), 63-145; 190-215; on doubtful Jewish inscriptions, see ibid., 144. See also Lüderitz's discussion of two inscriptions (his nos. 6 and 7) as a case in point for the question of the percentage of the Jewish population. Based on his analysis of a list of students enrolled in a gymnasium at Cyrene, he cautiously suggests a number of about one-fifth or one-fourth. He conjectures a similar statistic for the number of Jews interred at Teucheria; see ibid., XI-XII. Similarly, Applebaum claimed that of the 416 published inscriptions from Teucheria, he considered 103 Jewish, i.e. 25%; see Applebaum (1961), 30.

³⁷ Lüderitz (1983), XI-XII. Based on the city's re-foundation as a Roman colony (*colonia*), Applebaum suggested that it was damaged in the wake of the Jewish Diaspora uprising in 115-117 CE and hence, had to be rebuilt; see Applebaum (1961), 28, 32.

Are They, Or Are They Not? On the Jewishness of the Artapanus-Inscriptions at Teucheria

At the outset of this study, we noted that there are seven occurrences of the name Artap(h)anus in the funerary inscriptions from Teucheria, and these are:

Eastern quarry, Court XV:

- (1a) Lüderitz No. 69:³⁸ mentions a Philon, son of Artaphan (φίλων Ἀρταφαντος).
- (1b) Lüderitz No. 69: the same inscription features an Artaphan, son of Artaphan (Ἀρταφαν Ἀρταφαντος).³⁹

Eastern quarry, Court XI:

- (2) Lüderitz No. 12c:⁴⁰ records a Pausanias, son of Artaphan (Παυσανίας Ἀρταφαντος).
- (3) Lüderitz No. 12i:⁴¹ commemorates an Artaphan (Ἀρταφαντος).
- (4) Lüderitz No. 12k:⁴² records an Artaphan, son of Artaphan (Ἀρταφα[v] Ἀρταφαντος).
- (5) Lüderitz No. 12k:⁴³ mentions Ammonia, daughter of Artaphan (Ἀμμ[ων]ία [Ἀ]ρ[τα]φα[v]το[ς]).
- (6) Lüderitz No. 69:⁴⁴ mentions an Artaphan, son of Artaphan (Ἀρταφα[v] Ἀρταφαντος).

As mentioned, the cemetery at Teucheria is divided into two main burial complexes: The Western and the Eastern Quarries. Like the burial caves of Jerusalem,⁴⁵ these two complexes can be sub-divided into singular burial caves, or “courts”, each containing a number of rock-cut tombs around it. It has been observed that some courts contained more evidence of Jewish use, than others. One such example is Court XV, which is located in the Eastern Quarry. Applebaum has, perhaps somewhat exaggeratedly (or over-enthusiastically), stated that “... the probable exclusively Jewish character of Court XV indicates a communal organization ...”.⁴⁶ While, indeed, many Jewish names occur in the tombs located in Court XV,⁴⁷ far from *all of them* should be uncritically considered Jewish. Rather, they should be considered mostly Jewish on account of the

³⁸ SEG IX 709; Lüderitz (1983), 145; Philon’s father, Artaphan, is no. 3 in Ilan (2008), 623.

³⁹ It seems that Ilan missed this particular individual, who is mentioned in the same inscription. Note that an Artaphan, son of Artaphan is also mentioned in our nos. (4) and (6).

⁴⁰ Unpublished; Lüderitz (1983), 193; no. 4 in Ilan (2008), 623.

⁴¹ Unpublished; Lüderitz (1983), 195; no. 5 in Ilan (2008), 623. This individual is most likely the father of the person mentioned in the next inscription (our, no. 4; Lüderitz No. 12k).

⁴² CIG 5267; SEG IX 613; Lüderitz (1983), 196; no. 6 in Ilan (2008), 623.

⁴³ CIG 5267; Lüderitz (1983), 196; no. 7 in Ilan (2008), 623. We should note that the reading of Artaphantos is a reconstruction.

⁴⁴ SEG IX, No. 613; Lüderitz (1983), 145; no. 2 in Ilan (2008), 623.

⁴⁵ See Avni and Greenhut (1996).

⁴⁶ Applebaum (1961), 42.

⁴⁷ In particular the name Judas is quite prominent in the inscriptions from Court XV, see e.g. Lüderitz’s nos. 59c, 62a, 63b.

frequent occurrence of theophoric names such as Dositheos and Theodorus, which indeed enjoyed popularity among Diaspora Jews, but can no longer be considered solid evidence for the Jewishness of these names' bearers. This notwithstanding, the relatively high frequency of Jews buried in Court XV, makes us sensitive to the possibility that a given tomb in that complex may indeed be Jewish: Of the 125 inscriptions from Cave XV published by Lüderitz and Reynolds (1983), twenty are definitely Jewish on account of onomastics (No. 45c: Iesus; no. 45f: Iudas; no. 50d: Mara [which is a biblical name, see Ruth 1:20]; no. 50i: Iosepos; no. 52d: Iesus; no. 54b: Iuda[s]; no. 54d: Tubias; no. 55b: Iohanes; no. 55c: Iosepus; no. 55d: Martha of Iohanes; no. 55e: Iohanes of Iohanes; no. 55g: Iohanes; no. 59c: Iudas; Nr. 62a: Iudas; no. 62b: Sabbatis; no. 63a: Eisakas [Isaac]; no. 63b: Iudas of Iosepos; no. 13c: Iudas [Reynolds]; no. 14a: Iesus [Reynolds]; no. 16a: Iosipus [Reynolds]), which makes up 16%.⁴⁸ If we add to that inscriptions that are potentially Jewish on account of their being names popular with Jews in the Diaspora, such as Dositheos and its derivatives (which occurs 11 times), Theodotus and its derivatives (which has 6 occurrences), Sara (occurs twice) and Marin (also twice attested), then we reach a figure of approx. 35% Jews in Cave XV.

A similar conclusion may be reached in case of Court XI, which also features a relatively high concentration of potentially Jewish tombs (ca. 42%, as indicated by the occurrence of Jewish names).⁴⁹ This allows us to make an argument for the Jewishness of the inscriptions *per* context. Indeed, all of the seven extant inscriptions mentioning the name Artap(h)an(us) are located in the Eastern Quarry in burial courts, generally regarded as Jewish; two in Court XV, the other five in Court XI.

In inscriptions (1a), (2) and (5), the name Artaphanus notably occurs alongside non-Jewish names. In inscription (3) the name occurs on its own, leaving us with no additional hint as to whether or not this individual was Jewish. Inscriptions (1b), (4) and (6), feature sons bearing the same personal name as their fathers. In case of (1b), the inscription also lists the names of other individuals, indicating a family tomb: Arimmas, son of Apollonides; Straton, son of Philon; Philon, son of Artaphan; Dados, son of Onomarchos; and Artaphan, son of Artaphan. None of the latter bore a decidedly Jewish name, although two of the names are attested for Jews.⁵⁰ The custom of naming the son

⁴⁸ Although many of those names (in particular patriarchal names such as Joseph and Isaac, but also the name Iohanes) listed here became popular with Christians, we should point out that this development occurred only much later (in the 4th cent. CE); see Bagnall (1982). The deceased listed here, all died much earlier than the 4th cent. CE, namely sometime prior to the outbreak of the Diaspora revolt (around 115 CE); see our n. 37 above. What bolsters the assumption that the deceased were Jewish and not Christians, is the fact that the latter never — for obvious reasons — adopted the name Judas.

⁴⁹ Of the nineteen inscriptions published by Lüderitz and Reynolds (1983), eight (including the five mentioning Artaphan listed above) are potentially Jewish on onomastic accounts (No. 11d: Hipponika, daughter of Theodotus [Reynolds]; no. 11e: Eirene, daughter of Theodotus [Reynolds]; no. 12a: Saloi, daughter of [...] [Reynolds]; according to Ilan (2008), 3:192 [n. 9], Saloi was a popular Cyrenian form of the name Salome.

⁵⁰ For Philon, see Ilan (2008), 392-394. Arimmas, which was a popular local Cyrenian name (on which see in particular Applebaum [1961], 37, 46; and Ilan [2008], 692). Five individuals from Teucheria with that name are recorded by Ilan ([2008], 691), but only one of them, can be considered Jewish with certainty (because of his patronym), namely

after the father, although rather uncommon among non-Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt and the Cyrenaica, is nevertheless attested.⁵¹ On the other hand, this custom was somewhat popular among Jews (of the Diaspora, as well as in Judaea), for example:

- (a) in *Antiquities* 13.62 Josephus tells us about the fate of an Onias, son of Onias;
- (b) as stated in *Jos. Vita* 8, Josephus had a brother called Mattityahu, whose name was accordingly Mattityahu, son of Mattityahu;
- (c) a tax list from Trikomia in the Arsinoite nome (P. Vindob. G 40663), dated to 254-231 BCE, mentions a Simon, son of Simon (in col. VIII);
- (d) Luke 1:59 contains a reference to a certain Zacharias ben Zacharias;
- (e) *JIGRE* 54 attests a Judas, son of Judas;⁵²
- (f) *JIGRE* 57 records a John, son of John;⁵³
- (g) in rabbinic literature, we encounter a Bonaim ben Bonaim (*bEruvin* 85b);
- (h) *tNiddah* 5:15 mentions a R. Ḥananiah ben Ḥananiah;
- (i) in *yShabbat* 1:18d 74, a Yose ben Yose ben Perurah.

Thus, based on this finding, in the cases in which we encounter the homonymity of father and son in the inscriptions from Teucheria, I tend to argue in favor of the Jewishness of the individuals. This would mean that we should consider the Artapanuses mentioned in (1a & b), (4) and (6) Jewish, while doubts about the Jewishness of the individuals commemorated in (2), (3) and (5) remain;⁵⁴ more certainly so, when we consider their burial context, among a cluster of tombs (in quarries XI and XV) with a high frequency of Jewish graves.

It is conspicuous that the name, whether its bearers were Jewish or not, was popular in Cyrenaica, but not in Egypt.⁵⁵ Why the name was popular in Teucheria is a difficult question to answer. One reasonable explanation for its occurrence at this specific location is the assumption that mercenaries (Persians, or persons hailing from Persian regions) had settled there already during the Persian period. This could certainly be true for Jewish mercenaries who were settled there as early as the Ptolemaic period or before;⁵⁶ and let us recall here, in parentheses, that the name Artapanus is Persian. Indeed, as reported by Josephus (*Contra Apionem* 2.44), Jewish mercenaries settled in

Arimmas, son of Judah (who is no. 2 in Ilan's list, *ibid.*). We thus have clear evidence for the fact that Jews adopted local Cyrenian names. Notably, the latter's tomb is located in Court XV of the Eastern Quarry (see Lüderitz, [1983], 105-106 [no. 54b]).

⁵¹ See Clarysse (2013), 4687-4688; and Hobson (1989), 157-174. With respect to the custom of naming the son after the father, there is no indication that it was introduced based on the father's death before the birth of the son.

⁵² Horbury and Noy (1992), 122-123.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 125-127.

⁵⁴ Doubts about the Jewishness of these inscriptions were also expressed by Lüderitz and Reynolds, although they incorporated them in their collection of *Jewish* inscriptions from Teucheria; see Lüderitz (1983), 144, 191.

⁵⁵ For the other recorded occurrences of the name in the ancient Graeco-Roman world, see our n. 17 above.

⁵⁶ A case for a mercenary background of the Jewish community of Teucheria has already been made by Applebaum (1961), 39-40.

the Pentapolis region of the Cyrenaica from the time of Ptolemy I Lagos (367 BCE-282 BCE). Also Lüderitz suggested that the toponym of the nearby settlement of Magdalis in the Marmarika region indicates the presence of Jewish mercenaries who settled there in the early Ptolemaic period.⁵⁷ Therefore, it is quite possible that the name Artapanus was retained by the first Jewish military settlers who arrived in the region during the late Persian/early Ptolemaic period — as suggested by E. Meyer⁵⁸ — and passed on among the Jewish population until the Roman period.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that we do not possess unequivocal evidence for the assumption that the individuals bearing the name Artap(h)an(us) who were laid to rest in the cemetery of Teucheria were indeed Jewish, the fact that the name is recorded in such high frequency and only in this limited region of the Western Jewish Diaspora is suggestive. As argued by Honigman with respect to other Jewish communities in Egypt, it appears that the Jewish community of Teucheria also cherished certain names it cared to pass on,⁵⁹ perhaps including Artap(h)an(us). It is thus tempting to assume that the Jewish historian, Artapanus (and/or his family), hails from Jewish Teucheria in the Cyrenaica. Artapanus would not be the only Jewish author from that region; another famous Jewish-Cyrenian author was Jason of Cyrene, who is said to have authored a five-volume history of the Maccabean uprising known today in its abbreviated version as the Second Book of Maccabees. Moreover, the fact that Cyrene was part of the Ptolemaic/Egyptian orbit would also explain the Egyptian setting of Artapanus' writings and his familiarity with native Egyptians, their customs and religion.⁶⁰

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⁵⁷ Lüderitz (1983), XII.

⁵⁸ See above, n. 9.

⁵⁹ Honigman (2009), 121-123; see also similarly, Applebaum (1961), 36-37.

⁶⁰ I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Prof. Tal Ilan for reading and commenting on an earlier draft of this paper.

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