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“Remember the Exodus!” – and Related Issues within “Historical Apocalypses”

1 “Exodus” and “Counter Exodus:” The Case of the “Pagan” Historiographers

As it is widely known, the “Exodus” story cannot be interpreted, especially in Hellenistic times, without referring to what should be called a “Counter Exodus” story. Particularly among the so-called pagan authors, the Exodus drama was used for both, the denunciation and propagation of the Jewish identity. In some respects, the Hellenistic “Counter Exodus” – seemingly – turned upside down what readers could find in the biblical Exodus story: Jews became the villains rather than victims, lepers, unclean rather than clean, oppressors rather than oppressed and, sometimes, the leader of the refugees, Moses, is a tyrant. The Hellenistic versions of “Exodus” started, at the latest, with Hecataeus of Abdera in the late fourth century BCE and ended up in later Roman times, e. g., with Lysimachus, Pompeius Trogus and, for sure, the anti-Jewish Roman historiographer Tacitus. The traditions of this so-called “Counter Exodus” might relate to authentic sources. Nevertheless, most versions of these accounts came to us through the writings of Josephus or the church fathers, like Justin the Martyr, Clement of Alexandria or Eusebius of Caesarea. Only some of the stories reached us in versions stemming from pagan writers who collected earlier historiography as, e. g., Diodorus of Sicily and Photius in the case of Hecataeus of Abdera.¹

On the one hand, modern interpretations mostly agree that the pagan Exodus story stems from native Egyptian traditions, e. g., referring to the “Hyksos,” and should be read as independent pieces of work with only meager or simply no connection to the Jewish “Exodus” tradition. On the other hand, there are also explicit anti-Jewish references, most of which are regarded as being later interjections as, e. g., the Osarseph-Moses story in Manetho’s account. Nevertheless, these “counter stories” can be interpreted as the starting point for the Egyptian-Greek anti-Jewish propaganda that was part of what Peter Schäfer called “Judeophobia”.² Furthermore, it is difficult to identify the cause of the Egyptian

¹ For a comprehensive collection of sources and their translations see Stern, GLAJ; cf. also Holladay, FHJA I.

² Cf. Schäfer, Judeophobia, 15–33, 163–69.

or Hellenistic motivation for such a generalized and harsh polemic against the Jews. Therefore, Erich Gruen argued for a genuine Jewish reshaping of the tales in a positive sense. Gruen opines that among the Jews

... particularly those dwelling in Egypt had strong incentive to reshape the tale (i.e., the “Exodus” tale; SB). To them the reasons for escape from Egypt were less important than the justification for their return. The self-esteem of Hellenistic Jews in Egypt could be bolstered by an enhancement of their ancestors’ history in the land.

Gruen further emphasizes that the stories did not originate as “Counter Exodus” tales. They were not written as a response to the biblical Exodus account. What is more, they were not initially directed against the Jews in Hellenistic-Roman Egypt.

Instead, Jewish writers and thinkers themselves grafted their people’s presence onto those stories, found analogues to Moses, set up their forefathers as conquerors, and took credit for the overthrow of false Egyptian idols.³

Gruen’s conclusions are challenging and sophisticated, sometimes a little too much sophisticated – especially in the eyes of his critics.⁴ Nevertheless, Gruen’s interpretations are telling as they point to some important insights and generate interesting results. First, the *literary* use of the Exodus motif in the times of Hellenistic diasporas in Egypt is closely related to the “diasporan” Jewish life-style and, especially, “diasporan” Jewish identity and self-perception.⁵ Secondly, Gruen’s interpretation reminds us, again, that many of those anti-Jewish attitudes that come along in the historians’ sources in fact represent genuine Jewish perspectives, as they are apparent in the work of Josephus, and should be distinguished from the pagan author’s views. Thirdly, and not at the latest, Gruen’s examination also reminds us of the fact that negative attitudes and intentions of the so-called “Counter Exodus” are intermingled with neutral, or even positive, aspects of and attitudes towards the Jews.

The earliest tradition, connected with Hecataeus of Abdera, who lived in the time of Alexander the Great and Ptolemy I (late fourth and early third centuries BCE), is a good case in point. The so-called “Aegyptiaca” of Hecataeus, transmitted, edited and obviously augmented by Diodorus Siculus (first century BCE) for

³ For the quoted passages see Gruen, *Heritage*, 71. For Gruen’s argument and discussion of the sources cf. pages 41–72.

⁴ See, e.g., the discussion in Collins, *Reinventing Exodus*, 52–62, reprinted in Collins, *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture*, 44–57.

⁵ Cf. also Gruen, *Diaspora*, 54–83.

his lost “*Bibliotheca Historica*,” are preserved by Photius, the Byzantine patriarch of the ninth century. Herein we find a fragment of the “Book on the Jews,” written by Hecataeus – its authenticity is widely accepted.⁶ It starts with some struggle between Egyptians and “foreigners” caused by a pestilence that lead to the expulsion of the alien people from Egypt. This motif, pushed by the idea that these aliens followed different rites of religion and venerated only one God, is well known also from other accounts. But, Hecataeus, contrary to several historiographers on the Jews, “seems to have preferred a moderate version of the expulsion story, and perhaps even to have ‘softened’ it: [...] From Hecataeus’s (sic! SB) version it appears that the whole population in Egypt suffered from the plague, because the Egyptians themselves neglected the worship of their Gods.”⁷ Later in the text, Moses is introduced (Photius, cod. 244, with reference to Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, 40.3:3, 4):⁸

(3) The colony was headed by a man called Moses, outstanding both for his wisdom and for his courage. [...] (4) [...] The sacrifices that he established differ from those of other nations, as does their way of living, for as a result of their own expulsion from Egypt he introduced an unsocial and intolerant mode of life.

The “unsocial and intolerant way of life” or better say: “misanthropic and inhospitable way of life,”⁹ is a prominent anti-Jewish motif, rather of Greek than of Egyptian origin.¹⁰ Nevertheless, Hecataeus did not judge on it. And what is more, he tried to explain this “misanthropic and inhospitable way of life” by referring to the people’s expulsion from Egypt. All in all, Hecataeus is clearly not a candidate for “Judeophobia”, but at the same time he should not be called “philosemitic.”¹¹ His report is rather neutral, and he closely connects the expulsion from Egypt with specific customs of “foreigners,” customs and rites that re-

⁶ Cf. Bar-Kochva, *Pseudo-Hecataeus*, 18–24.

⁷ So Bar-Kochva, *Pseudo-Hecataeus*, 28–29.

⁸ Text and translation: Stern, *GLAJ* I: nr. 11 (quoted after Walton [ed.], *Diodorus of Sicily*, 281–283). The Greek original reads: (3) ἡγεῖτο δὲ τῆς ἀποικίας ὁ προσαγορευόμενος Μωσῆς, φρονήσει τε καὶ ἀνδρείᾳ πολὺ διαφέρων. [...] (4) [...] τὰς δὲ θυσίας ἐξηλλαγμένας συνεστήσατο τῶν παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔθνεσι καὶ τὰς κατὰ τὸν βίον ἀγωγὰς· διὰ γὰρ τὴν ἰδίαν ξενηλασίαν ἀπάνθρωπὸν τινα καὶ μισόξενον βίον εἰσηγήσατο.

⁹ This is the suggested translation by Berthelot, *Hecataeus*.

¹⁰ On the Greek influences of the account cf. Bar-Kochva, *Pseudo-Hecataeus*, 30–39.

¹¹ As Bloch, *Antike Vorstellungen*, 38, points out: “Die angebliche jüdische Misanthropie wird durch die Erinnerung der Juden an das Xenelasie-Erlebnis motiviert, also aus der Geschichte heraus erklärt. Die ‘verkehrte Welt’ der jüdischen Gesetze und Riten wiederum wird als bewusste Konsequenz der Misanthropie vorgestellt.”

mind the revelation of the law that Hecataeus already mentioned earlier. The latter and not authentic Hecataeus tradition also pointed to the way of how Jewish people observed the divine law (Pseudo-Hecataeus, Fragment 1, after Josephus C. Ap. I.191):¹²

[...] they cannot be shifted from their conviction; on the contrary, defenseless they face on behalf of these both tortures and the most terrible of all deaths rather than deny their ancestral ways.

The passage as a whole refers at the same time to Jewish religious persecutions in Persian times, as it contradicts Achaemenid policy towards foreign religious practices. Consequently, it is nearly impossible to identify a proper historical setting for the compositional text that fits with the religious persecutions mentioned in the text.¹³ However: As we will see later, the close connection between the Exodus motif and the reference to the Jewish laws and customs is of some importance for the way the “Exodus” found its reception in the “Historical Apocalypses”. But before I go into detail, I would like to contrast the neutral or positive attitude towards the Jews in Hecataeus’ and Pseudo-Hecataeus’ traditions with a distinct negative use of the “Exodus”, whether anti-Jewish or not. In the second half of the first century CE, the Roman historiographer Tacitus wrote one of the most prominent stories concerning the “Counter Exodus.” In his “Histories,” Tacitus refers to the people in another ethnographic excursus (*Historiae* V.3:1, 4:1):¹⁴

(3:1) Most authors agree that once during a plague in Egypt, which caused bodily disfigurement, King Bocchoris approached the oracle of Ammon and asked for a remedy, whereupon he was told to purge his kingdom and to transport this race into other lands, since it was hateful to the gods. [...] (4:1) To establish his influence over this people for all time, Moses introduced new religious practices, quite opposed to those of all other religions. The Jews regard as profane all that we hold sacred; on the other hand, they permit all that we abhor.

12 Translation: Barclay, *Against Apion*, 111; cf. also Holladay, FHJA I:309; the Greek original (after Holladay, FHJA I:308) reads: [...] οὐ δύνανται μεταπεισθῆναι τῇ διανοίᾳ ἀλλὰ γεγυμνωμένως περὶ τούτων καὶ αἰκίας καὶ θανάτοις δεινοτάτοις μάλιστα πάντων ἀπαντῶσι μὴ ἀρνούμενοι τὰ πάτρια.

13 Cf. the discussion of different solutions in Bar-Kochva, *Pseudo-Hecataeus*, 91–97.

14 Text and translation: Stern, GLAJ II: nr. 281 (quoted after Moore [ed.], Tacitus, 177–179). The Latin text reads: (3:1) Plurimi auctores consentiunt orta per Aegyptum tabe quae corpora foedaret, regem Bocchorim adito Hammonis oraculo remedium petentem purgare regnum et id genus hominum ut invisum deis alias in terras avehere iussum. [...] (4:1) Moyses quo sibi in posterum gentem firmaret, novos ritus contrariosque ceteris mortalibus indidit. Profana illic omnia quae apud nos sacra, rursum concessa apud illos quae nobis incesta.

While Hecataeus’ reflection on the disdain of misanthropy is open for interpretations, also concerning the question of its origin – Egyptian or Greek (cf. also the *Potter’s Oracle*) – , in the case of Tacitus the Roman provenance of accusations against religious habits in the context of the “expulsion from Egypt” is quite clear. What can be seen from the quotation mentioned above is, in John Barclay’s words, that “[f]rom the political perspective the ‘otherness’ of Judaeans religious tradition is nothing but outright hostility, their indigenous customs simply ‘depraved’.”¹⁵ Tacitus clearly designates all Jewish customs and laws as “opposed to those of all other religions,” thus: Tacitus characterizes Jewish religious customs as wrong customs. Furthermore, he connects all of them with the Exodus from Egypt – not to mention no less than four different sagas that reflect the origins of the Jewish people, all of which agree in their negative tone towards the Jews.¹⁶

I started with the very short glance at pagan authors with the aim to point at the polymorphism of Exodus motifs in Hellenistic-Roman times. It is a polymorphism in terms of the origins, conceptualizations and intentions of this motif. Especially two observations are striking when it comes to the question of “Exodus” in apocalypticism: First, the expulsion or Exodus is strongly connected with religious customs and law. Second, the motif could have been used in a positive as in a negative attitude facing the Jews.

2 “Apocalypse,” “Apocalypticism” and the Question of “History”

Before I discuss the most intriguing examples of the “Exodus” in its apocalyptic re-reading, let me first explain what is meant by an “apocalypse,” and further, of how historical aspects come into view within this literary genre. To start, it is important to distinguish between the genre of an “apocalypse” and literatures commonly marketed with labels referring to apocalyptic traditions or groups. The following differentiation is at hand: “apocalypse” as a product of literary genre, “apocalypticism” as marking the social identity of a group (e. g., the Qumranites) – including a certain worldview – and “apocalyptic eschatology” as articulated in the later prophetic writings.¹⁷

¹⁵ Barclay, *The Politics of Contempt*, 110.

¹⁶ Cf. Bloch, *Antike Vorstellungen*, 84–92.

¹⁷ Cf. Hanson, *Apocalypses*, 279–282.

The literary genre can only be described, but it cannot be defined.¹⁸ The description embraces core motifs like the addiction of the whole world to sin and evil. The trajectories that mostly originate from times of crisis articulate hope for a transcendent world that is incomparable to this world. The incomparability is guaranteed by the means of several tools. One of them emerges in the concept of end-time mysteries that are paralleled by divine revelations, culminating most of the times in an eschatological judgment. Of further importance is the narrative framework.¹⁹ This framework embraces two different strategies of revelation: the first one is the use of heavenly or cosmological journeys of the protagonists. A second strategy reconstructs history – for instance, “history” of a kind as it also appears in the canonical writings of the Old Testament. Here, I would like to stay away from terms like “*Heilsgeschichte*” (or the “history of salvation”) because of the rather diverging concepts of historical remembrance within the so-called “Historical Apocalypses.” In German speaking scholarship, it was especially the former student of Gerhard von Rad, Günter Reese, who assumed that some of the apocalyptic sources, as, e.g., the “Animal Apocalypse” (1 En. 85–90), attest to an ongoing tradition of Old Testament “salvation history.”²⁰ But against this, the concept of “history” in texts like the “Apocalypse of Weeks” (1 En. 93:1–10; 91:11–17) or the “Animal Apocalypse” is much too cosmologically focused and includes unexpected turns in mode – from a negative to a positive view on “history” and *vice versa*.²¹

18 For Jan Assmann’s call: “contra definitionem pro descriptione” cf. Rudolph, *Apokalyphtik*, 774–776.

19 Most of these aspects – and more – that can be detected in the literary genre of an “apocalypse” were collected and explained by Willi-Plein, *Geheimnis*, 62–81, reprinted in Willi-Plein, *Sprache*, 159–176. Two years later, John Collins provided us with a definition of the genre that was originally discussed within the “SBL Semeia-Group” and has found wide acceptance until nowadays: cf. Collins, *Apocalypse*, and the more recent explanation in idem, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 2–11. For the widespread acceptance of the description cf., recently, Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 5–8.

20 Cf. Reese, *Geschichte Israels*, esp. 119–122. Reese emphasizes (p. 120–121): “Der bisherige Verlauf der Geschichte und das erwartete Eschaton bilden eine nahtlose Einheit, weil das Eschaton die Vollendung der Geschichte Gottes mit Israel bringt. [...] Es war Israel auch in seiner Spätzeit nicht möglich, über Gott und die Welt, über seinen Glauben und seine Hoffnung anders als im stets neuen Bemühen um das Verstehen seiner Geschichte zu sprechen. Darin ist das späte Israel den Anfängen und Grundlagen seines Glaubens treu geblieben. Darin zeigt sich aber auch die Zeit des frühen Judentums als Überlieferungsträger zwischen Altem und Neuem Testament.”

21 Cf. Ego, *Vergangenheit*, 189–190. For the recent scholarly discussion concerning the theology and history in the “Animal Apocalypse” cf. Olson, *Reading*, 5–13.

In general, the narration, or reshaping, of “history” in Jewish apocalypses to a certain degree participates in the construction of the transcendent world, as it is presented in these apocalypses. As a result, “history” becomes part of divine revelation. The Book of Daniel is a good case in point. The final vision starts in chapter 10 with the following introduction (v. 1):²²

In the third year of Cyrus, King of Persia, a word was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it concerned a great trouble. He understood the word, understanding was his in the vision.

What follows is an epiphany of an angel and the well-known visionary examination of history within the seer’s discourse with an angel (Dan 11:2–12:4). This heavenly dialog focuses on the Seleucids and the career of Antiochus IV Epiphanies (cf. 10:20–21). Daniel’s ability to be a visionary is unique, because the people who were with him did not see (10:7). This is because Daniel is the one who set his mind to gain understanding and to humble himself before his God (10:12). Consequently, already the setting of the third vision of Daniel paves the way for an understanding of “history” in terms of an end-time *revelation*.²³

All in all, the meaning of “history” in apocalypses is closely linked with, and in several ways contextualized or embedded in, a mythical end-time scheme.²⁴ This is also true for the Exodus motif.

3 “Exodus” in Jewish “Historical Apocalypses” and Related Sources

With regards to the theme, topic, certain motifs or literary allusions to the “Exodus”, e. g., also including references to the “plagues” or significant terms for divine power, as they are attested in the Book Exodus of the Old Testament (Ex 1–14[15]), the evidence of this material in Second Temple Jewish apocalypses is rather meager. To start with the “Historical Apocalypses,” the motif is remembered in Dan 9 (v. 15), in the “Apocalypse of Weeks” (1 En. 93:1–10; 91:11–17;

²² For the Hebrew text (MT) cf. Freedman, *The Leningrad Codex*, 902.

²³ All “Historical Apocalypses” coincide in this concern. Therefore, it is highly problematic to reconstruct a historical chronology, e. g., in the Book of Daniel and in the “Animal Apocalypse,” as Daniel Olson has suggested: cf. Olson, *Chronology*, 63–74.

²⁴ Nevertheless, a simple juxtaposition of “history” in prophetic eschatology and “myth” in apocalyptic eschatology finds no proof in the sources: cf. DiTommaso, *History*, 413–418, who rejects the thesis of Jindo, *Myth*, 412–415.

here: 93:6), in the “Animal Apocalypse” (1 En. 85–90, here: 89:15–27), in Fourth Ezra (4 Ezra 13:43–44), the “Apocalypse of Abraham” (Apoc. Abr. 29:15; 30:1–8) and in the “Apocalypse of Zephaniah” (Apoc. Zeph. 6:10). In later Christian apocalypses, most of which surely include Jewish traditions, innuendoes of the “Exodus” are attested in the “Apocalypse of Elijah” (Apoc. El. [C] 2:44; cf. 2:39), the Syrian “Apocalypse of Daniel” (chap. 37) and in the later Christian Ezra tradition of “Fifth Ezra” (5 Ezra 1:7–14).

Most tellingly, already the textual evidence, as listed above, yields to quick results: What can be said quite generally is that the Exodus account is only of minor significance in Jewish and early Christian apocalypses. A closer examination also shows that the oldest Jewish apocalyptic scriptures from the fourth or third century BCE, the “Book of the Watchers” and the “Astronomical Book,” dispense with the Exodus motif entirely. The reason may be that especially the Enochic apocalypses obviously stayed away from significant topics of the Torah, especially the Mosaic Torah, in general.²⁵ On the other hand, the Enochic “Animal Apocalypse” is the only scripture in the list that refers to the Exodus narrative in an elaborated mode.

If one looks at the details of the sources, the reader arrives at further incontrovertible conclusions: First of all, some motifs from the Exodus account of the Old Testament were used by the apocalypses to appear in a re-contextualized reference framework. The “Apocalypse of Abraham,” the only known apocalypse that combines historical flashbacks with otherworldly journeys, refers to the plague narrative in order to illustrate the end-time punishment of the gentiles (Apoc. Abr. 30:1–8). In chapters 1–8 the apocalypse finds its setting within the story of Abram/Abraham in Gen 11:27–12:3; 15:1–21 and 22:1–19 in order to highlight Israel’s election and covenant. Abraham is the glorified righteous one who converted from his father Terach’s idolatry and followed the one God of Israel. Later, Abraham (cf. Apoc. Abr. 15:4) ascended up to heaven together with the angel Yahoel to see seven visions, among them the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple.²⁶ At the end of Abraham’s heavenly visit, ten plagues as

²⁵ I would not go so far as to postulate a nearly complete lack of Torah in the writings from Enochic apocalypticism or in Enochic Judaism, as Gabriele Boccaccini or Andreas Bedenbender assume: cf. Boccaccini, *Hypothesis*, esp. 166–170; Bedenbender, *Place*, 65–79. See also the discussion in Nickelsburg, *Wisdom*, 81–94, and Henze, *Apocalypse*, 313–317.

²⁶ The text of Apoc. Abr. is only preserved in a late Slavonic version, but obviously goes back to a Semitic original that most scholars date at the turn of the first to the second century CE, simply because the composition can be read as a response to the Roman destruction of the temple: cf. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 225–232; Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 159–164; Harlow, *Abra-*

end-time judgment are announced (Apoc. Abr. 29:15); after that, Abraham finds himself on the earth seeking for understanding (30:1):²⁷

29:15 In those days I [i.e., the “Eternal, Mighty One”; SB] shall bring upon all earthly creation ten plagues through evil and disease and the groaning of the bitterness of their souls²⁸.

30:1 And while he [i.e., the “Eternal, Mighty One”; SB] was still speaking, I [i.e., Abraham; SB] found myself on the earth, and I said, “Eternal, Mighty One, I am no longer in the glory in which I was above, but what my soul desired to understand I do not understand in my heart.”

The following ten plagues against the heathens (Apoc. Abr. 30:4–8) are designed to help Abraham’s desire to understand. Not only the series of ten plagues, but also content and purpose of some of the counted plagues resemble the scourge in the Exodus narrative (Ex 7:14–11:10):²⁹

The fiery conflagration of the cities resembles the outgoing fire against the land of Egypt (Apoc. Abr. 30:4; Ex 9:23–24: fire hail), the pestilence among the cattle reminds of the strike of the Egyptian livestock with a deadly pestilence (Apoc. Abr. 30:5; Ex 9:1–7), the famine in the native land and in the world, also pestilence and hunger, refers to the plagues that endanger the entire harvest (Apoc. Abr. 30:5,7; e.g., Ex 8:20: heavy swarms; Ex 10:12–15: locusts) and hail and increase of snow parallels, again, the hail (Apoc. Abr. 30:6; Ex 9:23–24: fire hail).

With regards to the contextualization of the Exodus motif in the “Apocalypse of Abraham,” three different levels should be taken into account: First, on the level of the narrative or telling time, the setting refers to the elect and righteous Abraham. In the heritage of their forefather Abraham, the Israelites took part in the divine covenant. Secondly, on the level of apocalyptic re-interpretation, because of his conversion and righteousness Abraham became aware of the end-time revelation within the divine sphere. The core content of this revelation embraces the future fate of the heathens as illustrated by the plagues. Thirdly, on the level of a reconstructed historical environment of the apocalypse (first or second century

ham, 295–298; Jones, *Jewish Reactions*, 251–256. On the Slavonic textual evidence from the middle ages cf. Santos Otero, *Überlieferung*, 389–406.

27 Translation: Kulik, *Retroverting*, 133–34.

28 The expression “the bitterness of their souls” (cf. also Apoc. Abr. 6:1) is also preserved in the Old Testament: cf. Isa 38:15; Ezek 27:31; Job 7:11; 10:1; Prov 14:10 (cf. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 71–72).

29 For the following cf. on the Exodus plagues Utzschneider/Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, 188–192, and the comparison with Apoc. Abr. in Philonenko-Sayar/Philonenko, *Apokalypse*, 453: notes.

CE), the plagues stand in harsh contrast to the destruction of the temple by the Romans. Furthermore, the apocalyptic setting includes a bifocal hermeneutics: the history is embedded in a cosmological rendering. The latter is due to the several allusions to mystical connotations, e.g., the function of “view,” “seeing” and “appearance” (esp. in Apoc. Abr. 21)³⁰, motifs that remind of the vision from the book of Ezekiel. Also the angelology should be compared: Yahoel shows common features known from the figure of Metatron in the *Merkabah* literature.³¹

But what is more, the assumed end in the “Apocalypse of Abraham” explicitly refers to the Exodus. Apoc. Abr. 31:2–4 reads:³²

2 And they will go out into an alien land.

3 And they will be enslaved and distressed for about one hour of the impious age.³³

4 And of the people whom they will serve – I am the judge.

The passage clearly alludes to Gen 15:13–14, where the divine promise is revealed in a dream to the sleeping Abram.³⁴ Already the canonical text of Gen 15:13–16 is a late insertion that interrupts the covenant scene and points towards the Exodus narrative.³⁵ As the passage appears within an “eschatological” setting in the “Apocalypse of Abraham,” making explicit that slavery in Egypt will last “one hour” or “one hundred years” (cf. Apoc. Abr. 28:5) until the Lord will judge “the people whom they will serve,” also the idea of “Counter Exodus” comes into mind – as already recognized, it is a common motif among Hellenistic-Roman historiographers.

With regards to the so-called “Counter Exodus,” another late apocalypse should be considered: the Coptic “Apocalypse of Elijah.” The Christian text stems from the third century CE and was probably written, in Greek language,

30 Cf. Lourié, Propitiatorium, 267–277.

31 For the comparison with the visions of Ezekiel see, e.g., Apoc. Abr. 18:1–14 and Ezek 1:15–28; 10:6–12. See also Halperin, Faces, 103–113.

32 Translation: Kulik, Retroverting, 35.

33 Cf. on the time-scale Apoc. Abr. 28:5 (translation: Kulik, Retroverting, 32): “And in the fourth host there are one hundred years and also one hour of the age. And for one hundred years it will be in evil [circumstances] among the heathen <and an hour in their mercy and agreement as among the heathen>.”

34 The text of Gen 15:13–14 reads (NRSV): “13 Then the Lord said to Abram, ‘Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years; 14 but I will bring judgement on the nation that they serve, and afterwards they shall come out with great possessions.’”

35 Cf. Blum, Komposition, 378–379.

in Egypt. It contains a description of the end-time and includes several passages of ancient Jewish provenance.³⁶ The core passages describe an end-time war with the “antichrist.” But, contrary to the “Historical Apocalypses,” historical schematization and distinctive features of the genre are largely missing in the “Apocalypse of Elijah.” Nevertheless, the end-time struggles refer to the plagues. One of the signs of the end emphasizes that the “river of Egypt will become blood” (Apoc. El. [C] 2:44; cf. Ex 7:19–20). The metaphor of steadfast symbolic power is also attested in Egyptian sources (*Admonitions of Ipuwer*, *Perfect Discourse*) and conceptualizes a “unique image of traumatic disorder.”³⁷ Of more interest is the passage that alludes to the “Counter Exodus” motif in Apoc. El. [C] 2:39:³⁸

In those days, these kings will arise among the Persians, and they will take captive the Jews who are in Egypt. They will bring them to Jerusalem, and they will inhabit it and dwell there.

Read from a Jewish or even Christian perspective, this passage is rather puzzling. The capture and expulsion of Jews to Jerusalem is reasonable from an anti-Jewish point of view, as it is preserved among the Hellenistic historiographers (see above). Here, the “Counter Exodus” makes sense only if interpreted as the hope of Egyptian Jews of the Diaspora for a “Second Exodus.”³⁹

This exactly begs the question of Lorenzo DiTommaso. Was there hope for a “Second Exodus” in Jewish apocalypticism for those people who were still living in “Exile?” Or did an apocalyptic communion – in every case – understand the presence of suppression, violence and grief as “Exile?”⁴⁰ In search of an answer, DiTommaso refers to the so-called “covenantal theology” of penitential prayers in Dan 9, 2 Bar. 48; 54 and 4 Ezra 8. Especially in Dan 9, conflicting worldviews collide: a confessional prayer for mercy in Dan 9:3–19 including Deuteronomistic language and theology⁴¹ on the one hand, an angelic revelation of end-time knowledge that interprets the period of time until the end of exile from Jer 25:11–

36 Cf. Oegema, *Apokalypsen*, 76–93; Dahmen, *Außerbiblische Elia-Schriften*.

37 Frankfurter, *Elijah*, 203.

38 Translation: Wintermute, *Apocalypse*, 742.

39 Cf. Schrage, *Elija-Apokalypse*, 247: notes. Frankfurter, *Elijah*, 226–228, interprets the passage as a mix of pagan and Christian traditions that combined the anti-Jewish oracle of expulsion from Egypt (cf. CPJ 520) with the Christian idea of the Antichrist who “takes the seat in the temple of God” (2 Thess 2:4).

40 On this aspect cf. also Knibb, *Exile*, 253–272, reprinted in Knibb, *Essays*, 191–212.

41 Cf. Collins, *Daniel*, 349–351.

12 and 29:10 as lasting “seventy weeks of years”⁴² on the other hand. While the first part, the prayer, represents the worldview of the novelistic Daniel (chaps. 1–6), the “time-*Pesher*” at the end of Dan 9 coincides with the apocalyptic worldview.⁴³ Also included are different concepts of salvation: while in Dan 1–6, salvation is contingent and this-worldly, the apocalypse of Daniel prefers a hope for salvation that is mostly unrelated to human action and strictly otherworldly.⁴⁴

In Dan 9 the concrete allusion to the Exodus is attested in v. 15, i. e., the final part of the prayer that pleads for divine mercy (vv. 15–19). Here, I refer to vv. 15–16:⁴⁵

15 And now, Lord our God, who brought your people from the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and made yourself a name as on this day, we have sinned, we have acted evil.

16 O Lord, according to all your acts of righteousness, let your anger and wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, the mountain of your holiness, because on account of our sins and the transgressions of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people (have become) a reproach for all those around us.

At the start of the plea for mercy, the Lord is addressed. Therefore, the Exodus motif simply characterizes the God of Israel. Also in Jer 32:20–21, in a prayer (cf. v. 16), God is addressed as the one who brought Israel out of the land of Egypt and made himself a name because of the divine signs and wonders.⁴⁶ Within the context of the prayer, the Exodus motif alludes to the Deuteronomistic theology of the divine name. But within the context of Dan 9 and its intention to link the two world views mentioned above, the Exodus motif appears to re-conceptualize the mighty acts of God: in terms of an end-time liberation of Jerusalem, as being still “exiled.” It is interesting to see that already the prayer in v. 16, which laments about Jerusalem as “a reproach for all those around us,” paves the way for this newly contextualized understanding of the Exodus.

⁴² For the *Pesher*-like interpretation and temporal schematization see Dimant, *Exegesis*, 373–393, reprinted in Dimant, *History*, 315–332.

⁴³ Cf. DiTommaso, *Prayer*, 117–123, 131–133.

⁴⁴ See DiTommaso, *Prayer*, 123.

⁴⁵ For the Hebrew text (MT) cf. Freedman, *Leningrad*, 901. For the meager attestation of Dan 9,15–17 in 4QDan^e [4Q116] col. II, frgs. 3 ii,7, pointing to a “proto-masoretic text,” cf. Ulrich, *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls*, 771. – For an outline of Dan 9, especially vv. 3–19: prayer, that distinguishes between vv. 3–4a: introductory statement, v. 4b: invocation, vv. 5–11a: acknowledgment of divine punishment, and vv. 15–19: prayer for mercy, cf. Collins, *Daniel*, 347.

⁴⁶ For further references cf. Collins, *Daniel*, 350–351.

In order to conclude this survey, I would like examine only two more “Historical Apocalypses” stemming from the middle of the second century BCE: the “Apocalypse of Weeks” (1 En. 93:1–10; 91:11–17) and the “Animal Apocalypse” (1 En. 85–90). It is beyond any doubt that both compositions are related to one another. But the details of this relationship can be disputed. To start with the “Apocalypse of Weeks,” this composite work introduces visions of heaven as they were revealed to Enoch who “read everything in the heavenly tablets” (1 En. 93:2). The text evidence embraces manuscripts in Ethiopic, Coptic and Aramaic. The latter Aramaic fragment from Cave 4 near Qumran (4QEn^s ar [4Q212]: mid-first century BCE) has proven the correctness of a late displacement in the Ethiopic tradition.⁴⁷ The content of this apocalypse preserves a structured retelling of the history of the “cosmos” from an Israelite point of view. The first six “weeks” range from the primeval history to the Babylonian exile. In “weeks” eight to ten, characterized by judgment, a future temple and the building of a new heaven, the end-time is concerned. Evidently, the seventh “week” marks the time of the real author, wherein a “perverse generation” will arise, but at its end the “chosen righteous will be chosen” (1 En. 93:9–10).⁴⁸

In regards to the question of Exodus, the fourth “week” (1 En. 93:6) is in the focus of scholarly debate:⁴⁹

And after this, in the fourth week, at its end, visions of holy and righteous ones will be seen, and a law [or covenant, Eth.: *ser'ata*; SB] for every generation, and an enclosure will be made for them.

At first glance, there is no indication of the Exodus motif. But the “Apocalypse of Weeks” lacks every concrete allusion, due to the fact that names and particular events have been largely avoided by the author(s). Consequently, almost every word in this verse is controversial in its meaning.⁵⁰ However, there is agreement within the recent scholarly discussion that the content of the fourth “week” alludes to the time of the Exodus and the theophany on Mount Sinai.⁵¹ Furthermore, the expression “visions of holy and righteous ones” signals the commissioning of angelic beings. This could lead to the following alternatives: Firstly,

⁴⁷ The 4QEn^s ar [4Q212] fragment that preserves 1 En. 91:11–17 follows on 93:9–10. Cf. the excursus in Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 414–415.

⁴⁸ Cf. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 62–65.

⁴⁹ Translation: Stuckenbruck, 1 Enoch 91–108, 102.

⁵⁰ Cf. the discussions in Reese, *Geschichte Israels*, 59; Dexinger, *Zehnwochenapokalypse*, 127–128; Hoffmann, *Gesetz*, 184; Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 446; Stuckenbruck, 1 Enoch 91–108, 103–108.

⁵¹ Cf. Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 446.

angels could function as mediators of the law, as they are involved in the revelation of the Torah in Jewish sources from Tannaitic times (like the *Palestinian Targum* to Deut 33:2) and also in early Christian texts (cf. Act 7:38, 53; Gal 3:19–20; Heb 2:23).⁵² Second, an alternative reading of the “visions of holy and righteous ones” refers to the *Book of Jubilees* that shows in general significant influences coming from the early Enochic works (cf. Jub. 4:17–19).⁵³ In Jub. 48:23, one of the most significant examples of a re-writing of Israel’s escape from Egypt, we read:⁵⁴

And I [i.e., the angel of Presence; SB] stood between the Egyptians and Israel and we delivered Israel from his hand and from the hand of his people. And the LORD brought them out through the midst of the sea as through dry land.

The angel, withstanding Prince Mastema who supported the Egyptians (cf. Jub. 48:9–12), carries into effect the will of the Lord to bring Israel out of Egypt. Also, the “visions of holy and righteous ones” (1 En. 93:6) refer to angels in the prelude to the revelation of the law. For sure, all these suggestions are good guesses, far from being proven. If the setting of the fourth “week,” from Exodus to Sinai, is taken for granted, still there will be a third option: perhaps the tradition of the “Apocalypse of Weeks” intentionally used replacement characters with vague content open for interpretation. As a consequence, Exodus and the Torah could be linked more strongly. Besides the fact that the canonical Book of Exodus clearly emphasizes the sequence of Exodus and law, at any rate, 1 En. 93:6 is the only passage in the whole Enochic corpus that refers to the Mosaic law or covenant.⁵⁵ Furthermore, I already pointed out the close connection between the Exodus motif and the reference to the Jewish laws and customs, e.g., in the Hecataeus tradition.

The “Animal Apocalypse” provides us with the most elaborated re-writing and interpretation of the biblical Exodus account among the Jewish apocalypses. In 1 En. 89:15–27 the symbolic language retells passages from Ex 1–15. The whole composition reconstructs the history of Israel, starting with the creation and flood narratives, with the goal to overcome the religious crises under Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Parallels with the “Apocalypse of Weeks” and the Book of

⁵² For an elaborated argument to underscore this thesis cf. Stuckenbruck, 1 Enoch 91–108, 103–107.

⁵³ For this argument cf. Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 446.

⁵⁴ Translation: Kugel, *Jubilees*, 444.

⁵⁵ Cf. Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 446; Stuckenbruck, 1 Enoch 91–108, 103; Tiller, *Commentary*, 291–292.

Daniel as well emphasize the importance of the Hellenistic epoch in the “Animal Apocalypse” (cf. 1 En. 90:1–19). What is more, the preservation of four Aramaic manuscripts from the Dead Sea Scrolls, of which the oldest dates back to the second half of the second century BCE, points to the second third of the second century BCE as the date of origin.⁵⁶ The language distinguishes between animals for mankind: wild and unclean animals for the nations and sheep for the Israelites. Stars and humans represent angels and superhuman beings, God is called the “Lord of the sheep.” Within the structure of a cosmic timetable and comparable to the “Apocalypse of Weeks,” the world history is clearly structured into three ages. Each of them starts with a “white bull:” Adam, Noah and an “eschatological” patriarch. In the end, a last judgment (1 En. 90:20–27), together with the construction of a “New Jerusalem” (90:28–36), leads to a total transformation. The historical retrospect is borrowing material from the biblical account and the “Book of the Watchers.”⁵⁷

With the following remarks I focus on the version of the narrative about the rescue at the Red Sea (1 En. 89:21–27). The Exodus version of the “Animal Apocalypse” includes many specimens that, again, show different strategies of re-contextualization. The most prominent and also most important function of the Exodus is caused by the way it was embedded within the setting of the time of the real author(s), the time of the Maccabean revolt. Concerning this, the final verses of the Exodus narrative in 1 En. 89:26–27 are telling:⁵⁸

26 And when they saw the Lord of the sheep, they turned to flee from his presence, but that swamp of water flowed together and suddenly returned to its natural state. And the water swelled up and rose until it covered those wolves.

27 And I saw until all wolves that had pursued those sheep perished and sank.

The text clearly resembles Ex 14:28, the sinking of the Egyptians, represented by the wolves, who pursued the Israelites, identified with the sheep. But in contrast to the Ethiopic text, the Aramaic fragment tells us more. In 4QEn^e ar [4Q206] 5 iii, 15, it is noticed again: “[... and] the water covered them”.⁵⁹ The repetition of the motif of covering waters in 1 En. 89:26–27 in the Aramaic version is not only to

⁵⁶ Most scholars prefer a dating between 165 and 160 BCE: cf. Tiller, Commentary, 61–79; Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 360–361.

⁵⁷ For some important general remarks cf. Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 67–70; Ego, *Vergangenheit*, 173–178; Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 88–92. For the structure of the “Animal Apocalypse” cf. Tiller, Commentary, 15–18.

⁵⁸ Translation: Nickelsburg/VanderKam, 1 Enoch, 125.

⁵⁹ For text and translation cf. Tiller, Commentary, 174, 284; García Martínez/Tigchelaar, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 428–429. The Aramaic text has: חתפא חפוע ליהוקן using the verbal root חתפה, *Pe'al*.

reaffirm the annihilation of the Egyptians but to anticipate the Maccabean battle in 1 En. 90:18 (cf. also v. 15):⁶⁰

And I saw until the Lord of the sheep came to them and took in his hand the staff of his wrath and struck the earth, and the earth was split, and all the beasts and all the birds of heaven fell (away) from among those sheep and sank in the earth, and it covered over them.

As in the times of the Exodus Pharaoh and his chariots, i. e., the wolves, sank into the seas that covered them, so in the times of the Maccabean wars, possibly the second war near Beth-Zur in 164 BCE (cf. 2 Macc 11:6–12),⁶¹ the Greek enemies of Judas Maccabaeus, the beasts and the birds, and their commander (Lysias) sank in the earth that covered them. Consequently, the language of the Exodus narrative resembles, in some sense as a typology, the wars and conflicts of the time of the real author(s) of the “Animal Apocalypse”. But this does not only point to the historical setting of the text, but also to the way the history of the Exodus was understood.⁶² History is, again, re-read within a cosmological frame because of the terminology. The “sinking” and “being covered over” that is also attested in the flood narrative (cf. 1 En. 89:1, 6), and the way the Exodus battle points towards the Maccabean battle, as it opens up the end-time wars, shows in a way how history turned out to be “cosmic” or “universal history.” In a certain way the Exodus anticipates the coming war and the judgment at the end of “history.”⁶³

Lastly, I would like to stress a last but very important motif in the Exodus account of the “Animal Apocalypse” that helps to show the general hermeneutics of the passage. In 1 En. 89:21 it is said (cf. also vv. 25, 26, 27):⁶⁴

And I looked at the sheep until they went out from the wolves, and the wolves eyes were blinded, and the wolves went out pursuing those sheep with all their might.

The narrative account starts with Enoch who “looked” and the wolves, the Egyptians, whose “eyes were blinded.” Later, also the sheep, the Israelites, are characterized as being blinded, e. g. in the wilderness story (cf. 1 En. 89:28 with v. 32). In recent times, scholarly discussion of the “Animal Apocalypse” laid much em-

⁶⁰ Translation: Nickelsburg/VanderKam, 1 Enoch, 134.

⁶¹ Cf. Schwartz, 2 Maccabees, 394–397.

⁶² Cf. Tiller, Commentary, 285, 287; Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 401; Olson, Reading, 64–66, 171.

⁶³ On the description and function of “history” and its end-time implications cf. Ego, Vergangenheit, 186–190.

⁶⁴ Translation: Nickelsburg/VanderKam, 1 Enoch, 125.

phasis on the motif of “seeing” and “open” or “darken the eyes.”⁶⁵ First, and most important, the “I” of Enoch is the one who “sees”. Therefore, the motif of “seeing” is connected with the general mode of revelation as it is implemented, not only, in the “Animal Apocalypse.” Secondly, the dualism of “open” and “darken the eyes” obviously recalls obedience and disobedience of the law, albeit the Mosaic law is not explicitly mentioned in the narrative of the apocalypse. Most recently, Daniel Olson has argued, with reference to insights of James VanderKam, that the motif of “seeing” alludes to the etiology of Jacob-Israel, “the man who sees God.” Olson opines that both the Jacob and the Enoch figure stand in parallel structures within the “Animal Apocalypse.”⁶⁶ Although Jacob’s importance and centrality in the composition is beyond doubt, I would consider the argument of this hypothesis too far-fetched. But certainly, the dualism apparently warns the interpreter, not to lay too much emphasis on the role of determination in the context of any “cosmic history.”⁶⁷

4 Conclusions

Due to the rather meager evidence of the Exodus or Exodus motifs in apocalypses, it is important to clarify in advance: if one draws inferences from the data, their hypothetical and to some extent challenging character should be kept in mind. Nevertheless, the “Exodus” is one of the central religious motifs, especially when it comes to social, cultural and religious categories of remembrance. Jan Assmann has extensively written on the topic:⁶⁸

Remembering is an act of constant disowning. Egypt must be remembered in order to know what lies in the past, and what must not be allowed come back (sic! SB). The theme of remembering is therefore central to the Exodus myth and to the constellation of Egypt and Israel. This is not only a myth to be remembered but a myth about remembering, a myth about past and future. It remembers the past in order to win the future.

With regards to the apocalypses, one cannot imagine a greater distance between the past and the future. Consequently, the apocalypses include also the Exodus

⁶⁵ Cf. Tiller, *Commentary*, 285, 292–293, and the excursus in *Nickelsburg*, 1 Enoch 1, 380–381. Cf. also Ego, *Vergangenheit*, 178–180; Assefa, *L’Apocalypse*, 254–262; Portier-Young, *Apocalypse*, 363–368; Olson, *Reading*, 66–72.

⁶⁶ Cf. Olson, *Reading*, 74–75. See also VanderKam, *Open and Closed Eyes*, 284–292.

⁶⁷ For the role of determination within apocalyptic worldview in general cf. Popović, *Apocalyptic Determinism*, 255–270.

⁶⁸ Assmann, *Moses*, 8.

motif in “a *myth* about past and future”. Especially in the “Apocalypse of Abraham” and the “Animal Apocalypse” the Exodus is connected with settings of the historical author(s), i. e., the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE and the defilement of the temple under Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The plagues as a counter concept to the Jewish war in the “Apocalypse of Abraham” and annihilation of the Egyptians as a reference to Greek defeat against the Maccabees also construct a starting point for the apocalyptic future hope. This hope is associated with clearly positive implementations of the Exodus narrative and transforms the historical remembrance into a cosmological or universal form of history.

Furthermore, and perhaps a little more surprising, the apocalyptic re-reading of the Exodus draws its motifs from a rich repertoire. The emphasis on expulsion from Egypt, and not the escape out of Egypt, and the use of a strong link between the Exodus and the law evoke memories, which one associates with the tradition from the “Counter Exodus” in the narratives of Hellenistic-Roman historiographers.⁶⁹

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⁶⁹ In a seminal contribution to the question of how the “Exodus” reflects “liberation,” Jon Levenson has explained the role of law and consecration, as it already comes to view in the Exodus account of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible: cf. Levenson, *Exodus*, 151–153.

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