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van Kooten, G.H.

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MOSES/MUSAEUS/MOCHOS AND HIS GOD
YAHWEH, IAO, AND SABAOTH, SEEN FROM A
GRAECO-ROMAN PERSPECTIVE

George H. van Kooten

INTRODUCTION

The revelation of Yahweh's name to Moses on Mount Horeb is a decisive episode in the narrative of Moses according to the book of Exodus (3:1). Mount Horeb also features later in Jewish Scripture. It is the place where Moses transmits Yahweh's Ten Commandments to Israel (Deuteronomy 1:6; 4:10; 4:15; 9:8; also 1 Kings [= 3 Kings LXX] 8:9). Furthermore, it is the destination of Elijah's journey: an angel takes him out of his depressed state of mind under a broom bush and sets him on his feet for a journey to Mount Horeb, where Yahweh reveals himself to him, too (1 Kings [= 3 Kings LXX] 19:8). Yahweh's revelation on Mount Horeb is a powerful theme in the Jewish Scripture, and in this paper I shall address the question of whether something of the revelation of Yahweh's name to Moses, the second founding father of Judaism after Abraham, was known to the Greeks, and how *they* perceived Moses and Yahweh. As Martin Goodman has indicated, Graeco-Roman authors, aware of Jerusalem and the Temple as dominant features of Jewish religion,

wrote much about the role there of the priestly caste and the high priests as leaders of the people. There would be much less certainty about the divinity worshipped. Pagan writers mostly agreed that Jewish cult was aniconic, but they differed widely in their views on the deity understood by Jews as the recipient of their offerings. Was it Jupiter, as Varro thought, or Dionysus, as Plutarch suggested? Other suggestions included Iao, the sky, or the god 'of uncertain name'.¹

In this paper, I shall comment on the variety of these attempts at identifying the God of the Jews. First, I shall sketch a general picture of Greek views on Moses, paying special attention to the contexts

¹ Goodman 1998, 10.

in which the issue of the Jewish God's name arises. The specific relevant passages can only be appreciated, however, when viewed against the more general background of Graeco-Roman evaluations of Moses (§1). Secondly, this tracking of the 'Greek Moses' gives rise to a further consideration about whether in fact, in a particular Greek source, Moses might also have been identified with the figure of Mochos, who is frequently mentioned in Greek sources (§2). Thirdly, I shall give an analysis of Greek references to Iao, as Yahweh is referred to by Greek authors (§3). Finally, this analysis will be concluded with a discussion of Sabaoth, a name which also occurs in Greek authors and derives from the Hebrew Yahweh Sabaoth, as Yahweh is often called in full (§4).

Although nobody would decline the help of Menahem Stern's monumental, three-volume collection of Greek and Roman sources about the Jews, entitled *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem, 1974–84), I have first undertaken independent research into the Greek sources and supplemented this research with my use of Stern's collection. This procedure results in a different emphasis on one Greek source, Alexander Polyhistor, and has also yielded a text by the first-century AD physician Dioscorides not included in Stern. Nevertheless, I will make continuous reference to the numbers of Stern's texts.

1. THE FIGURE OF MOSES IN GRAECO-ROMAN AUTHORS

First, we turn to the figure of Moses in Graeco-Roman authors. I shall deal with the occurrences in chronological order. As we shall see, there is no reason to conclude with the lexicon article on Moses by Beate Ego in *Der neue Pauly*, that 'die Figur des Moses in der paganen Literatur vor allem im Kontext antisemitischer Aussagen (steht)'.² Ego's conclusion is at odds with Gager's much more balanced study by the name *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (1972), in which he shows that 'anti-Semitism was not a constant companion of the Jews in antiquity' and that there is little foundation for the view that the intelligentsia were the 'true anti-Semites' of the ancient world.³ The views among the intelligentsia were much more varied.

² Ego 2000, 417–18.

³ Gager 1972, 18.

At the end of his study, Gager concludes: 'The first and most enduring reaction of the Greek world to Moses was positive. (. . .) In the end, (. . .) the more positive view of Moses prevailed.'⁴ Although there does appear to have been a specific anti-Jewish polemic in Egypt in the Hellenistic-Roman era, the entire reception of Moses in antiquity seems to have been much less black-and-white than Ego suggests, and to have included a considerable positive perception.

The oldest reference to Moses in Greek literature seems to have been made by the sixth-century BC ethnographer and chronicler Hellanicus of Lesbos. Hellanicus is ranked with Herodotus and Thucydides as one of the authors who have done most to influence the development of Greek historiography. The next to refer to Moses was Philochorus (c. 340–260 BC), a scholar-historian who took a scholarly interest in local Greek history, chronography, cult, and literature. Both names we have on the authority of Pseudo-Justin Martyr (3rd–5th cent. AD), who says in his *Exhortation to the Greeks*, that 'those who write the Athenian history, Hellanicus and Philochorus, the author of *The Attic History*, (. . .) have mentioned Moses as a very ancient and time-honoured prince of the Jews' (*FGrH* 4 frg. 47b; 328 frg. 92b; Stern, No. 565).⁵

Lysimachus of Alexandria (355–281 BC), a contemporary of Philochorus, is perhaps an instance of animosity towards Moses and the Jews, as Josephus tells of him that he brings up the same theme as later writers such as Manetho, Apion, and Chaeremon, to the effect that the Jews in Egypt became afflicted with leprosy. According to Lysimachus, they took refuge in the temples and lived a mendicant existence, and spread the disease throughout Egypt. When the Egyptians were about to purge the temples of these impure and impious Jews, drive them out into the wilderness, and drown the lepers, Moses advised them to take their courage into their own hands, leave Egypt, and make their way straight through the wilderness until they reached inhabited country and settled in Judaea (*Against Apion* 1.304–311; cf. 2.145; Stern, No. 158). As we shall see, Lysimachus' anti-Semitic stance is also taken by other Egyptian authors like Manetho, Apion, and Chaeremon.

⁴ Gager 1972, 163–4.

⁵ Stern doubts if Pseudo-Justin's statement concerning the references to Moses by Hellanicus and Philochorus is indeed true; see Stern 1984, vol. 3, 38–40.

This anti-Jewish account contrasts sharply with the more positive account of Lysimachus' contemporary Hecataeus of Abdera (4th–3rd cent. BC), who likewise tells the story of the outbreak of pestilence in Egypt, but goes on to include not only the Jews, but also the Greeks as victims of the Egyptian measures against foreigners. The most outstanding and active foreigners banded together and arrived in Greece, among other destinations, whereas the greater number of foreigners were driven into Judaea. In this interpretation, both Jews and particular notable Greeks originated from Egypt, when they were expelled by the Egyptians. Within this framework, Hecataeus draws a more sympathetic picture of Moses. As Momigliano has suggested, his interest seems to be part of the Hellenistic discovery of Judaism after the Greeks' conquest of the Persian Empire. Although Greek curiosity extended to other barbarians as well, the

Jews were the newcomers. Everything had still to be learnt about them. It is perhaps not by chance that the first Greek book to speak extensively about the Jews was written by an adviser of Ptolemy I [Hecataeus, that is] in the years in which he was campaigning for the conquest of Palestine.⁶

In Hecataeus, Moses is called outstanding both for his wisdom and courage, and, as the founder of the temple of Jerusalem and the one who instituted its forms of worship and ritual, is credited with a very philosophical theology: 'he had no images whatsoever of the gods made for them, being of the opinion that God is not in human form; rather the heavens which surround the earth are alone divine, and rule the universe'.⁷ Hecataeus also highlights Moses' function as a lawgiver, and explicitly remarks that 'at the end of their laws there is even appended the statement: "These are the words that Moses heard from God and declares unto the Jews"' (cf. Deuteronomy 29:1;

⁶ Momigliano 1971, 83–84.

⁷ Hecataeus' positive remarks encouraged the writing of a pseudepigraphic work under his name *On the Jews*. According to Origen, 'a book about the Jews is attributed to Hecataeus the historian, in which the wisdom of the nation is emphasized even more strongly [in comparison with Numenius and Pythagoras, that is]—so much so that Herennius Philo in his treatise about the Jews even doubts in the first place whether it is a genuine work of the historian, and says in the second place that if it is authentic, he had probably been carried away by the Jews' powers of persuasion and accepted their doctrine' (*Against Celsus* 1.15). See the commentary by Chadwick 1953, 17 note 4 on this Jewish forgery. On Pseudo-Hecataeus, see, extensively, Bar-Kochva 1996.

Hecataeus in Diodorus Siculus 40.3.1–6; Stern, No. 11).⁸ As will become clear, this line of positive appreciation also runs through history and comes to the fore, for instance, in Strabo, who seems to elaborate on Hecataeus' positive representation of the Jewish concept of God.

An anti-Jewish image of Moses arises again in Manetho, who was an Egyptian high priest in Heliopolis in the early Ptolemaic period, around 280 BC, and wrote a history of Egypt. Interestingly, Manetho, a Heliopolitan priest himself, regards Moses as a former priest of the god Osiris at Heliopolis, who changed his allegiance, and in the place of his theophoric name Osarseph, which referred to Osiris, took on a new name, Moses (Verbrugge & Wickersham 1996, frg. 12; Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.250; cf. frg. 13; Stern, No. 21).

A very interesting case of Greek acquaintance with Moses is presented by Alexander Polyhistor. His familiarity with Moses also includes knowledge of the revelation of God's name to Moses. Born at Miletus in about 105 BC, Alexander was brought to Rome as a slave in the aftermath of the Mithradatic Wars. Having received Roman citizenship at Rome after he had been freed, Alexander became a teacher and produced, among other works, geographical compilations, including works on Rome, Delphi, Egypt, the Chaldaeans, and the Jews. His interest in the Jews may well have been prompted by Pompey's capture of Jerusalem and the subsequent incorporation of Judaea into the Roman Empire in 63 BC.⁹

Within this material, Alexander also drew comparisons between various historical sources and sought their congruence. This can be demonstrated from a remark on Moses. Commenting on a certain 'Cleodemus the prophet', who in his history of the Jews lists Abraham's descendants by his second wife Katura, Alexander explicitly remarks that this information is in conformity with the narrative of the Jews' lawgiver Moses (Josephus, *Jew. Ant.* 1.240).¹⁰ The congruence between Moses and other historical writers is of interest to this Roman ethnographer. This comparative historical research is also in evidence in

⁸ Hecataeus also regards Moses as having introduced 'an unsocial and intolerant mode of life', but explains this 'as a result of their [the Jews'] own expulsion from Egypt'.

⁹ Cf. Stern 1974, vol. 1, 157.

¹⁰ On Alexander Polyhistor's reference to Moses as a very ancient figure, see also Pseudo-Justin Martyr, *Exhortation to the Greeks*, edn. Morel, p. 10B; = K. Müller, *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum (FHG)*, frg. 24b.

the first-century BC historian Nicolaus of Damascus, who, in his universal history, draws similar lines between extrabiblical accounts and Moses.¹¹

Among his Jewish sources, Alexander Polyhistor also consulted the Jewish writer Artapanus, who lived in the third or second century BC. Although hardly a fragment of Artapanus has survived apart from the summaries which Alexander gives of Artapanus' works in his compilations,¹² and which, in turn, are now only extant in Eusebius of Caesarea, most scholarly attention seems to have been drawn to the Jewish author Artapanus himself, rather than his later Greek compiler Alexander Polyhistor, as if the latter were only the uninteresting vessel in which the literary remains of Artapanus were stored. Stern's collection of Graeco-Roman authors on Jews and Judaism is no exception. Stern gives the outline of Eusebius' *Preparation for the Gospel* IX.17–39 (Stern, No. 51a), in which Polyhistor's fragments from Artapanus are transmitted, yet does not give the full texts of the fragments themselves. It is highly remarkable, however, that Alexander made such extensive use of Artapanus' views on Moses, as we shall see presently, and included them in his encyclopaedic material.

These views on Moses included the idea that Moses, when grown up, was called Musaeus by the Greeks (Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* IX.27.3).¹³ Among the Greeks, Musaeus was known as a mythical singer with a descriptive name which pointed at his affiliation to the Muses. The second-century AD Greek philosopher Numenius, too, identified Moses with Musaeus (frg. 9; see below at the end of §1 and also Burnyeat, this vol., §1). Alexander Polyhistor, however, also took over Artapanus' view that Moses became *the teacher* of Orpheus (Eusebius IX.27.4). Whereas in Greek sources Musaeus is in fact viewed as *the disciple* of Orpheus, according to Artapanus' identification of Musaeus with Moses, followed by Alexander Polyhistor, this relationship is inverted and Orpheus is represented as *the disciple*

¹¹ Josephus, *Jew. Ant.* 1.94–95, with regard to the history of the Flood (Stern, No. 85).

¹² One fragment, which overlaps with a fragment transmitted through Alexander Polyhistor and Eusebius, has also been preserved via Clement of Alexandria; see Holladay 1983, vol. 1, 192 and 240 note 85.

¹³ Greek text and English translation, with annotations, in Holladay 1983, vol. 1, 208–243.

of Moses, alias Musaeus. This representation could be due to a corruption of Alexander Polyhistor's text in Eusebius, who preserved Alexander's summaries of Artapanus, but it seems likely that Alexander found Artapanus' identification of Moses with Musaeus and his reversal of the relationship between Musaeus and Orpheus unproblematic. As Holladay has pointed out, this is in fact only a modification of the Greek view in Hecataeus of Abdera (*FGrH* 264, frg. 25 = Diodorus Siculus 1.96.2) that 'Orpheus transmits to the Greeks the sacred wisdom gained in his Egyptian travels (. . .). It is altered by Artapanus so that Moses, not the Egyptian priests, becomes the ultimate source of Greek wisdom.'¹⁴ In this way Moses was interwoven into Greek history in an encyclopaedic work of a respected scholar in first-century BC Rome. Moses is even described as the first inventor of philosophy (IX.27.4). This philosophical characterization of Moses runs parallel to his depiction, as discussed above, by Hecataeus of Abdera.

Of direct relevance to the topic of this conference volume is the fact that Alexander also includes Artapanus' material on the revelation of God's name to Moses. On this account, once, as Moses was praying to God on behalf of the Jews, 'suddenly (. . .), fire appeared out of the earth, and it blazed even though there was neither wood nor any other kindling in the vicinity. Frightened at what happened, Moses fled but a divine voice spoke to him' (IX.27.21). After he met with the Egyptian king, Moses told him that he had come 'because the Lord of the universe had commanded him to liberate the Jews' (IX.27.22). The divine voice which revealed itself to Moses appears to be understood as 'the Lord of the universe'. Not amused by this statement, the king imprisoned Moses, but during the night Moses was miraculously freed from prison and gained access to the king, who, interrupted in his sleep, 'ordered the name of the god who had sent him.' As soon as Moses revealed this name to him, the king fell down speechless. Having been resuscitated by Moses, the king 'wrote the name on a tablet and sealed it securely, but one of the priests who showed contempt for what was written on the tablet died in a convulsion' (IX.27.23–26).

This extensive use of material from Artapanus by Alexander Polyhistor is proof of pagan acquaintance with the narrative of the

¹⁴ Holladay 1983, vol. 1, 232 note 45.

revelation of God's name to Moses in first-century BC Rome. Much emphasis is now laid on the magical influence of this name.¹⁵ Apart from Artapanus' report of this revelation, Alexander Polyhistor also knew the similar, though much briefer account in another Jewish author, Ezekiel the Tragedian, who is dealt with by Jacques van Ruiten in his contribution to this volume. Ezekiel, in his tragic drama *The Exodus*, also mentions the episode of the burning bush (frg. 8; Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 9.29.7) and talks about 'the divine word' (θεῖος λόγος) which beams forth from this bush (frg. 9; Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 9.29.8).¹⁶ Yet, Ezekiel does not mention the revelation of the name, but, in accordance with the play's central topic, only God's order to Moses to tell the Egyptian king that he should allow Moses to lead the Jews forth from Egypt (frg. 9). Since both accounts of the burning bush became part of Alexander's ethnographic, encyclopaedic compilations, it is no exaggeration to assume that this story must have become widespread, dependable information in particular circles at Rome. This is particularly probable if one bears in mind that Alexander taught people in Rome such as Hyginus, who was in turn the teacher of Ovid and was appointed by Augustus librarian of the Palatine Library, which might, therefore, well have included copies of Alexander Polyhistor's works.

Nevertheless, in Rome scholarly visitors and residents will have held varying and conflicting views of Moses. We know from Josephus that in the first century BC, Apollonius Molon of Alabanda, in the province of Asia, was among those whom Josephus deemed to have espoused ignorant and ill-willed reflections on Moses and his law code (*Against Apion* 2.145). Apollonius lectured at Rhodes and visited Rome in the 80s BC, and taught Romans such as Cicero (Stern, No. 49).

It was also in Rome that the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus settled down and, after decades of work, completed his grand universal history around 30 BC. The *Library of History*, as this universal history is called, runs from mythological times to 60 BC. The first six books are devoted to the period prior to the Trojan War and include a description of Egypt with mention of Moses in book 1, the contents of which Diodorus drew from Hecataeus of Abdera.

¹⁵ Cf. Gager 1972, 142.

¹⁶ Both fragments have also been preserved via Alexander Polyhistor. See Holladay 1989, 451 note 91 and 453 note 100.

Dealing with the first lawgivers in Egypt, Diodorus reports that, ‘After the establishment of settled life in Egypt in early times (. . .), the first, they say, to persuade the multitudes to use written laws was Mneves (Menas).’¹⁷ To convince the people, Mneves claimed that the laws had been given to him by the god Hermes, ‘with the assurance that they would be the cause of great blessing,’ and this device—Diodorus adds—was also used by the Greeks, who claimed to have received their laws from Zeus or Apollo, and by several other peoples, such as the Jews, among whom ‘Moses referred his laws to the god who is invoked as Iao’. Whereas Alexander Polyhistor shows that the story of the revelation of God’s name to Moses is known outside Jewish circles, Diodorus is the first testimony of Greek acquaintance with the actual name itself. Diodorus mentions this name in a context in which he discusses the alleged divine origins of human law. Egyptians, Greeks, Jews, and others ascribed their laws to the gods, ‘either because they believed that a conception which would help humanity was marvellous and wholly divine, or because they held that the common crowd would be more likely to obey the laws if their gaze were directed towards the majesty and power of those to whom their laws were ascribed’ (Diodorus 1.94.1–2; Stern, No. 58).¹⁸

This passage from Diodorus is particularly relevant here, as it demonstrates that Greeks such as Diodorus were aware of the name of Moses’ God, called ‘Iao’ in Greek. This is remarkable, as after the return from the Babylonian Exile in 539 BC, the Jews increasingly refrained from invoking and pronouncing the name of Yahweh.¹⁹ The Aramaic papyri from the Jews at Elephantine show that ‘Iao’ is an original Jewish term.²⁰ It is also found in a Septuagint version

¹⁷ Pseudo-Justin Martyr (3rd–5th cent. AD), *Exhortation to the Greeks*, edn. Morel, p. 10Bff., where he draws extensively on the passage from Diodorus Siculus, mistakes the reference to Mneves for Moses, turning the latter into the first lawgiver of the Egyptians.

¹⁸ This criticism of the divine origins of human law is also applied to Moses’ law by Apion; see Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.25 (Stern, No. 165): ‘Moses went up into the mountain called Sinai, which lies between Egypt and Arabia, remained in concealment there for forty days, and then descended and gave the Jews their laws’.

¹⁹ See, e.g., Bickerman 1988, 262–6 at 262: ‘Another marked change in the attitude of the new age to the ancient revelation was the progressive disuse of the proper name of the Deity, YHWH (disclosed to Moses in the burning bush), and the adoption of various circumlocutions to denote the God of Jerusalem. The change is postexilic; and Rösel 2000.

²⁰ Stern 1974, vol. 1, 172; and Schäfer 1997, 232 note 128, with detailed references to Cowley 1923 and Kraeling 1953.

of a fragment of Leviticus among the Dead Sea Scrolls, 4Q120, dating probably from the first century AD.²¹ Given the increasing use of 'Iao' in Graeco-Roman authors and in the Greek magical papyri, as we shall see below, Peter Schäfer's observation that Iao as the name of the Jewish God 'has gone out of fashion gradually on "official" documents [of the Jews] and has been favourably adopted by pagan writers and by literary genres (magical papyri, amulets, etc.) which tend to be syncretistic' seems to be most apt.²² From the surviving evidence, this development first comes to light in Diodorus' designation of Moses' God as Iao.

Moses is also referred to in other passages in Diodorus' universal history. We have already discussed the passage from Hecataeus, preserved in Diodorus, in which Moses was hailed for his wisdom and admired for his philosophical conceptions of God and aniconic form of worship (Diodorus 40.3). In passing, Diodorus also mentions Moses in his description of the desecration of the temple in Jerusalem by the Greek-Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who, ironically in view of Moses' supposed institution of aniconic worship, finds there 'a marble statue of a heavily bearded man seated on an ass, with a book in his hands,' which Antiochus supposes 'to be an image of Moses, the founder of Jerusalem and organizer of the nation, the man, moreover, who had ordained for the Jews their misanthropic and lawless customs' (1.94; Stern, No. 63).

The fact that despite such anti-Jewish overtones, one would be mistaken to lay too much emphasis on the anti-Semitic setting of pagan references to Moses, thereby obscuring some telling passages to the contrary, becomes clear again from Strabo, who studied in first-century BC Rome, and made several visits to Rome on later occasions. In his *Geography*, Strabo also discusses Judaea, whose inhabitants he regards as descendants of the Egyptians (16.2.34): 'Moses, namely', Strabo continues, 'was one of the Egyptian priests (. . .), but he went away from there to Judaea, since he was displeased with the state of affairs there, and was accompanied by many people who

²¹ See *pap4QLXXLeviticus^b (4Q120)*, published in Skehan 1992 in *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, vol. 9, frg. 20.4 (Lev 4:27), p. 174 and probably frg. 7.12 (Lev 3:12), pp. 170–1 (= Göttingen LXX Manuscript 802; edn. Wevers & Quast 1986, pp. 13, 58, 69). I owe this reference to my colleague Eibert Tigchelaar. See also Howard 1977 and Skehan 1980. For an occurrence of Iao, see also *PHeid 1359 Onomasticon of Hebrew Names*, third/fourth century AD: Io or Iao (edn. Deissmann 1905).

²² Schäfer 1997, 232 note 128.

worshipped the Divine Being (τὸ θεῖον).’ Similarly to Hecataeus and Diodorus, Strabo contrasts Moses’ view on God with the animal worship of the Egyptians and the anthropomorphic representation of the gods among the Greeks: ‘for, according to him, God is this one thing alone that encompasses us all (τὸ περιέχον ἡμᾶς ἅπαντας) and encompasses land and sea—the thing which we call heaven, or universe, or the nature of all that exists: ὃ καλοῦμεν οὐρανὸν καὶ κόσμον καὶ τὴν τῶν ὄντων φύσιν (16.2.35; Stern, No. 115).²³ It is perhaps not too far-fetched to suggest that Strabo’s interpretation of the Jewish God as ‘the nature of all that exists,’ ἡ τῶν ὄντων φύσις, is an allusion to the revelation of God’s name to Moses as Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὢν (Exodus 3:14). This ontological meaning of the name of Yahweh in Greek sources is the topic of Myles Burnyeat’s contribution to this volume.

By offering this ontological interpretation of the Jewish God, Strabo moves beyond Hecataeus. Already Hecataeus, as we have seen, equated the God of the Jews with the heavens. Talking about Moses, Hecataeus says that ‘he had no images whatsoever of the gods made for them, being of the opinion that God is not in human form; rather the heavens that surround the earth are alone divine, and rule the universe’ (Diodorus 40.3.4; Stern, No. 11; cf. Burnyeat, this vol., beginning of §4: ‘material things must be held together and governed by some changeless incorporeal entity’). As Stern informs us, Hecataeus explains the aniconic Jewish worship of God in the same way as Herodotus commented on the Persians: ‘The first nation known by the Greeks to have spurned idolatry were the Persians; see Herodotus, I, 131. Herodotus, who had some difficulty in defining an abstract deity, thought that the Persians worshipped the sky’²⁴ (see also Van den Berg, this vol., §2).

²³ A similar stress on the one-ness of God, combined with respect for the Jewish criticism of idols, is found in Varro, Strabo’s older contemporary in Rome. See Varro apud Augustine, *The City of God* 4.31: ‘He [Varro] also says that, for more than 170 years, the Romans of old worshipped the gods without an image. “If this practice had remained down to the present day”, he says, “the gods would have been worshipped with greater purity”. In support of this opinion, he cites, among other things, the testimony of the Jewish nation (. . .). Hence, when he says that only those who believe God to be the governing soul of the world have perceived what He is; and when he deems that the rites of religion would have been observed more purely without images: who can fail to see how close he has come to the truth?’ (transl. R.W. Dyson; Varro, frg. 18 edn. Cardauns).

²⁴ Stern 1974, vol. 1, 30: commentary on Diodorus 40.3.4.

Hecataeus' characterization of Jewish religion as worshipping the heavens is not only taken over by Strabo, but surfaces again in later authors such as Juvenal, at the beginning of the second century AD, and Celsus. In his fourteenth Satire, Juvenal depicts an instance of pagan reverence for the Sabbath. This devotion, in Juvenal's view, amounts to worshipping the heavens: 'Some who happen to have been dealt a father who reveres the Sabbath, worship nothing but the clouds, and the divinity of the heavens' (Juvenal 14.96–97; Stern, No. 301). Likewise, though only implicitly in his attack on the Christians, Celsus says: 'It is because certain Christians have misunderstood sayings of Plato that they boast of a God who is above the heavens and place Him higher than *the heaven in which the Jews believe*' (Celsus in Origen, *Against Celsus* 6.19; Stern, No. 375; see also *Against Celsus* 5.41 and Van den Berg, this vol., §2). Perhaps, as Bickerman suggests, this way of equating the abstract Jewish God with the heavens is also reinforced by the frequent designation of God in the Septuagint as 'the God of Heaven' (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ).²⁵

To return to Strabo, Strabo clearly shares this tradition, but it is interesting to see that he not only identifies the Jewish God with the heavens that surround the earth, as does Hecataeus, but also with the universe and, even more importantly, with 'the nature of all that exists (ἡ τῶν ὄντων φύσις)'. Strabo continues this passage by explaining the attraction of Moses' aniconic conception of God to 'not a few thoughtful men', whom Moses led away from Egypt to Jerusalem, and hailing Moses' establishment of an appropriate worship, ritual, and government. His descendants, however, are blamed for degenerating into superstitious and tyrannical people (16.2.36–37; Stern, No. 115).

Explicit anti-Jewish remarks come to the fore in first-century AD authors such as Apion and Chaeremon. Both are Egyptian, and their anti-Jewish attitude cannot be divorced from the Jewish-Greek tensions in Alexandria, which increased when Rome annexed Egypt in 30 BC. In this, they continue the line developed by Lysimachus and Manetho in the fourth/third century BC. Apion, who was head of

²⁵ Bickerman 1988, 263: 'translated into Greek (or Latin), this designation of the Lord was somewhat equivocal; "the God of Heaven" could seem to refer to the sky and therefore, to the cosmic deity of the philosophers. In fact, Greek savants perpetuated this interpretation of the God of Jerusalem; it still appears under the pen of Juvenal and even in Celsus' critiques of the Christian faith.'

the Alexandrian School, like Manetho regarded Moses as a native of Heliopolis, and, like Lysimachus and Manetho, considered the exodus from Egypt as a consequence of an outbreak of leprosy among the Jews (Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.8–9; Stern, No. 164).²⁶ Apion, whose anti-Jewish views were addressed by Josephus in the work now known as *Against Apion*,²⁷ was also part of the delegation sent by the Greeks of Alexandria to Gaius Caligula in order to resolve the Greek-Jewish tensions.²⁸ The designation of Moses as the leader of a group of lepers also occurs in Chaeremon of Alexandria, who taught the young Nero, wrote on Egyptian history and religion, and himself had Stoic inclinations (Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.288–290; Stern, No. 178).²⁹ It can hardly be a coincidence that the most anti-Jewish reports on Moses, those by Lysimachus, Manetho, Apion, and Chaeremon, and the depiction of Moses as having ‘much dull-white leprosy on his body’ by later authors such as Nicarchus (Stern, No. 248), Ptolemy Chennus (Stern, No. 331), and Helladius (Stern, No. 472) all emanate from Egypt. This is not to say that this view on the exodus of Jewish lepers from Egypt remained restricted to Egyptian circles. It is also voiced by authors such as Diodorus Siculus (*Library of History* 34–35, 1.1–2; Stern, No. 63), Pompeius Trogus at the turn of the Common Era (Iustinus, *Historiae Philippicae* 36.2.12; Stern, No. 137), Tacitus (*Histories* 5.3.1; Stern, No. 281) and, perhaps also by Herennius Philo of Byblos (Stern, No. 329; cf. No. 472). Nevertheless, the predominance of Egyptian writers among those expressing anti-Semitic views is significant.

A fascinating case in its own right is that of Herennius Philo of Byblos (c. AD 70–c. 160), who links the Jews and the name of their God with the history of the period before the Trojan War (*FGrH* 790, frg. 1; Stern, No. 323) in the following way.³⁰ Philo, who came from Byblos in Phoenicia, wrote a history of this area in Greek, and

²⁶ Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.9–14.

²⁷ On the figure of Apion in Josephus’ *Against Apion*, see Jones 2005.

²⁸ Apart from the references to Apion in Josephus’ *Against Apion* 2.9–14 (Moses as a Heliopolitan), 2.15 (Moses’ leadership during the exodus), 2.25 (Moses at Mount Sinai) and 2.28 (introduction of novel features into the story of Moses), Apion is also mentioned in connection with Moses in Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* X.10.16 as a source for the dating of Moses and the Jewish exodus from Egypt.

²⁹ Cf. the article by Frede 1989 on Chaeremon; fragments edited by Van der Horst 1984.

³⁰ This fragment has been preserved in Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 1.9.20–21 via Porphyry.

claimed that he derived his material about the Jews from Sanchuniathon of Berytus, who is credited with having written ‘the truest history’ of the Jews, and whose writings Philo purports to have translated into Greek.³¹ Philo underlines the trustworthiness of Sanchuniathon’s report on the Jews by stating that Sanchuniathon himself had received the records from Hierombalus, ‘the priest of the god Ieuo’, and had had his history approved of by Abibalus, king of Berytus, and by ‘the investigators of truth in his time’. It seems likely to me that Hierombalus, who is otherwise unknown in Greek sources, and is presented as the priest of the god Ieuo, a name equally unique to this passage, was understood, either by Philo or by his source, as a priest of the Jewish god Iao³²—the name we already encountered in Diodorus Siculus. For this reason Sanchuniathon’s history of the Jews would have been regarded by Philo as reliable, inasmuch as Sanchuniathon was presented as having derived his information about the Jews from a Jewish priest of Iao. As we shall see in due course, Philo himself, in another fragment from his works, proves to be familiar with Iao as the name of the Jewish God. This all adds up to the reasonable assumption that Philo of Byblos associated the Jews with the divine name Ieuo or Iao, and inferred that this name was already in use before the Trojan War.

Not far from Byblos in Phoenicia, other references to Moses are found in the surviving fragments of writings by the Platonist philosopher Numenius of Apamea in Syria, a near-contemporary of Philo of Byblos. Like Alexander Polyhistor before him, Numenius identifies Moses with Musaeus (frg. 9; Stern, No. 365; see also Burnyeat, this vol., §1 note 10). Whereas his fellow-Platonist Celsus ‘rejects Moses from the list of wise men’, which comprises, among others, Musaeus and Orpheus (Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.16; Stern, No. 375; see also Burnyeat, §1), Numenius shows a very different assessment of Moses, and even poses the rhetorical question: ‘What is Plato but Moses speaking Attic?’ (frg. 8; Stern, No. 363; see also Burnyeat, §§1–2). As is clear from Myles Burnyeat’s contribution to this volume,

³¹ Scholars agree that Sanchuniathon’s writings do not antedate the Trojan War, but are probably a product of the Hellenistic era. Cf. Goodman 1996; Attridge & Oden 1981; and Baumgarten 1981, 51, 55, 57, 58–60.

³² The name ‘Ieuo’ in this passage from Philo of Byblos (which has been preserved, via Porphyry, in Eusebius’ *Preparation for the Gospel*) is indeed changed into ‘Iao’ in Theodoretus of Cyrrhus in Syria (c. AD 393–466), *Graecarum affectionum curatio* 2.44.

Numenius' high esteem for Moses has to do with the latter's ontological appellation for God as 'I am that I am' (Exodus 3:14).³³ Numenius himself is also reported to have quoted Moses (frg. 1c), and to have told a story about Moses' confrontation with the Egyptian magicians Jannes and Jambres (frg. 10; cf. Exodus 7:11; cf. Burnyeat, §2). Indeed, among his fragments there is evidence of Numenius' acquaintance with the creation account of Genesis (frg. 30; Stern, No. 365).³⁴

This outline of the earliest Greek evidence concerning Moses may now suffice, and, apart from some occasional remarks, I will not go into the reception of Moses in the later Greek writers Galenus, Celsus (who is dealt with by Robbert van den Berg in this volume), Porphyry, and Julianus, and in the Greek magical papyri. These later authors are left out from further systematic consideration, as it has become sufficiently clear that the reception of Moses in Greek literature up to Numenius was varied, and reactions towards him certainly not predominantly hostile. There are even traces of acquaintance with the name of the Jewish God in Alexander Polyhistor, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Philo of Byblos, and Numenius. I shall add some other evidence below, but shall first discuss an interesting possibility that Moses was not only identified with Musaeus (as Alexander Polyhistor and Numenius have it), but also, elsewhere, with the Phoenician prophet and natural philosopher Mochos of Sidon, who allegedly lived before the Trojan War.

2. MOCHOS IN GREEK WRITINGS:

PYTHAGORAS, THE DESCENDANTS OF MOCHOS, AND THE JEWS

The reason to assume that Moses was identified with Mochos of Sidon lies in the fact that the Neoplatonist philosopher Iamblichus (*c.* AD 235–*c.* 325), in his book *On the Pythagorean Way of Life*, sketches Mochos in a way which is reminiscent of Moses. As John Dillon puts it, 'this Mochos (. . .) sounds suspiciously like a garbled form of

³³ Cf. also Stern 1980, vol. 2, 209: 'It has been suggested that Numenius had in mind the way in which Plato, introducing the Artificer, used the term τὸ ὄν αἰεὶ which Numenius combines with the ὁ ὄν of the Septuagint', with reference to Merlan 1967, 100.

³⁴ On this fragment, see Van den Berg 2005.

Moses himself.³⁵ According to Iamblichus, the philosopher Pythagoras, sent by his teacher Thales from Miletus to the Egyptian priests for further studies, first sailed to Sidon in Phoenicia (2.11–3.13). There,

he joined the descendants of Mochus, the prophet and natural philosopher, and other Phoenician hierophants, and was initiated into all sacred rites of the mysteries celebrated especially in Byblos and in Tyre, and in many parts of Syria. (. . .) Having learned besides that those which existed there (in Syria) were somehow derived and descended from the sacred rites in Egypt, he hoped thus to participate in the more noble, more divine and pure rites of Egypt. Filled with admiration for them, then, in accord with instructions from his teacher Thales, he was transported without delay by some Egyptian seamen who had most opportunely anchored at the shore under Carmel, the Phoenician mountain where Pythagoras spent a good deal of time alone in sacred pursuits. (. . .) And they (the seamen) remembered how, when they first anchored, he was seen coming from the top-most crest of Carmel; for they believed it the holiest of mountains, and not accessible to the common multitude (3.14; transl. J. Dillon & J. Hershbell).³⁶

The setting of this passage in Iamblichus gives the figure of Mochos a particularly Jewish aura. (1) It is suggested that the descendants of Mochos do not just live in Phoenician Byblos and Tyre but, more broadly, in Syria, which includes Syria Palestina. (2) Moreover, even the term ‘Phoenician’ seems to have been a rather general reference which overlaps to some extent with ‘Hebrew’ and ‘Jewish’. This is apparent from a passage in Philo of Byblos, which will be discussed later, in which Philo regards the divine name Iao, which we have already encountered in Diodorus Siculus as a designation of the *Jewish God*, as *Phoenician* (*FGrH* 790 frg. 7). This suggests that ‘Phoenician’ and ‘Hebrew’ are somehow interchangeable. (3) The rites which the descendants of Mochos celebrate in Syria are said to derive from Egypt. This might point to the Egyptian provenance of Moses and suggest that Mochos and Moses are considered identical. In that case, the mention of rites derived from Egypt and now common among Mochos’ descendants in Syria might presuppose the event of the exodus of Moses and his descendants from Egypt to Syria

³⁵ Dillon 1996, 143.

³⁶ Text quoted in Stern 1980, vol. 2, 443–444, but not as a separate number. Stern refers briefly to Mochos in Stern 1974, vol. 1, 129, mentioning Iamblichus merely in passing.

Palestina.³⁷ (4) Although Mount Carmel, mentioned in Iamblichus as the place of Pythagoras' regular retreat, is known in Antiquity as the holy mountain of Zeus (Scylax, *Periplus Scylacis* 104; 5th/4th cent. BC) and is also noted for a cult and oracle consulted by Vespasian (Tacitus, *Histories* 2.78.3 = Stern, No. 278; Suetonius, *Vespasian* 5.6 = Stern, No. 313), it also has a strong Jewish association inasmuch as it is linked with the prophet Elijah (1 Kings [= 3 Kings LXX] 18:19–20) in Jewish tradition. Like Pythagoras in Iamblichus, Elijah is said to have climbed to the crest of Carmel (1 Kings [= 3 Kings LXX] 18:42).

All these features seem to warrant Dillon's surmise that Mochos in this passage 'does sound suspiciously like a garbled form of Moses himself'.³⁸ If Mochos here is indeed to be identified with Moses, Iamblichus' picture of Pythagoras studying with the descendants of Mochos/Moses seems also to be congruent with views entertained by the third-century BC Greek biographer Hermippus of Smyrna, who had closely linked Pythagoras and the Jews (Stern, Nos 25 & 26; see also Burnyeat, this vol., §1 note 6). His views have been preserved in Josephus and Origen. According to Josephus, 'Hermippus (. . .), in the first book of his work on Pythagoras, (. . .) states that the philosopher (Pythagoras) (. . .) was imitating and appropriating the doctrines of Jews and Thracians' (*Against Apion* 1.163–165; cf. 1.14, 1.162 and 2.168, and Aristobulus, frgs. 3 and 4).³⁹ Origen, in a similar vein, says that 'Hermippus in his first book on "Lawgivers" related that Pythagoras brought his philosophy to the Greeks from the Jews' (1.15). Both reports on Hermippus talk about Pythagoras' contact with the Jews and thereby seem to confirm the likelihood that Iamblichus, in his story of Pythagoras' visit to Syria and Mount Carmel, blended Mochos and Moses.

³⁷ The Jewish emigration from Egypt to 'Syria Palestina' is also mentioned by the Stoic geographer Polemon of Ilium (fl. c. 190 BC); see Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 10.10.15: 'a part of the Egyptian army was expelled from Egypt and established itself in the country called Syria-Palaestina not far from Arabia' (Stern, No. 29).

³⁸ Dillon 1996, 143. Cf. also, more cautiously, Dillon & Hershbell 1991, 41: 'The connection of "Mochus" with Moses is tenuous.'

³⁹ The Thracians seem to be mentioned in one breath with the Jews, because the Thracians 'worshipped the god Sabazius, who was identified with the Jewish God' (Stern 1974, vol. 1, 96). On Sabazius and his identification with the Jewish God, see §4 below.

The close link between Pythagoras and the Jews is also established in other sources. According to Antonius Diogenes, an early imperial Greek writer of an encyclopaedic novel, 'Pythagoras came also to the Egyptians, the Arabs, the Chaldaeans and the Hebrews, from whom he learnt the exact knowledge of dreams' (Diogenes apud Porphyry, *The Life of Pythagoras* 11; Stern, Nos. 250 & 456a). In line with this picture of Pythagoras' interest in Judaism, there appear to be allusions to the Septuagint in Pythagorean writers such as Ocellus Lucanus (Stern, No. 40) and Pseudo-Ecphantus (Stern, No. 564). Conversely, a Jew such as Josephus could also compare a particular strand of Judaism, that of the Essenes, with Pythagoreanism: Essenes constitute 'a group which follows a way of life taught to the Greeks by Pythagoras' (*Jewish Antiquities* 15.371).⁴⁰ These cross-references between Pythagoreans and Jews make it probable that Iamblichus, in his account of Pythagoras' visit to the descendants of Mochos in Syria, in fact identified Mochos with Moses. Just as Alexander Polyhistor and Numenius saw no objection in identifying Moses with Musaeus, Iamblichus felt no hesitation in blending the figures of Moses and Mochos of Sidon.

That is not to say that this identification of Mochos with Moses occurred frequently. Let me make it clear: Jewish and Christian sources which mention Mochos resist such identification, nor do other pagan sources on Mochos reflect Jewish associations with this Phoenician sage. Josephus refers to Mochos as one of the number of Greek and barbarian historians of antiquity who provide external verification for the trustworthiness of Moses' account on the longevity of the patriarchs, thereby implying that Mochos and Moses are not one and the same (*Jew. Ant.* 1.107). The second-century AD Christian philosopher Tatian, in his proof of the early date of Moses, before even the foundation of Troy, also refers to Mochos, who is said to confirm in his Phoenician history, albeit in an indirect way, Moses' antiquity (*Oration to the Greeks* 36–37).⁴¹ Tatian too excludes an identification of Mochos with Moses.

Iamblichus' judaizing portrait of Pythagoras, in which Mochos and Moses are blended, perhaps becomes somewhat more understandable if one takes into consideration the fact that, in Greek sources,

⁴⁰ For traces of Pythagorean thought in Judaism, Stern refers to Lévy 1927, 211ff. and Walter 1964, 166ff. (Stern 1984, vol. 3, 33–34).

⁴¹ Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 10.11.10–11 is dependent on Tatian.

Mochos was not only regarded as a writer on Phoenician history,⁴² but was also credited with particular views on creation. According to the Stoic philosopher Posidonius (c. 135–c. 51 BC), as reports in Strabo and Sextus Empiricus have it, ‘the ancient dogma about atoms originated with Mochos, a Sidonian, born before Trojan times’ (Strabo, *Geography* 15.2.24–25; Edelstein—Kidd, frg. 285). Mochos regarded atomic bodies to be the primary and most fundamental elements of the cosmos (Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Physicists* I.359–363 [= *Against the Mathematicians/Professors* IX.359–363]). Such views on Mochos will have lent weight to claims that the study of philosophy had its beginning among the barbarians, as Diogenes Laertius asserts in the opening of his compendium on the lives and doctrines of the ancient philosophers; he mentions Mochos as an example (*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.1).

Mochos’ purported views on the physical constituents of creation may have facilitated Iamblichus’ merging of Mochos with Moses. Iamblichus calls Mochos not only ‘prophet’, but also ‘natural philosopher’ (φυσιολόγος). At the same time, Moses was known among Greeks for his creation account, as Numenius demonstrates (frg. 30), and the Jewish god was regarded by the Neoplatonist philosopher Porphyry as the creator of all things (Stern, No. 452). The Jewish god was also called the ‘god of the four elements’, or the demiurge by the schools of Numenius’ fellow-Neoplatonists Iamblichus, Syrianus, and Proclus (Stern, Nos. 467, 544 & 545). Because of his supposed views about the demiurge and creation, Moses was even preferred by Galen to Epicurus (Galen, *De usu partium* 11.14; Stern, No. 376).⁴³ The fact that Iamblichus himself seems to have characterized the Jewish god as ‘the god of the four elements’, as a creator god, might have expedited the coalescence of Mochos, as natural philosopher, and Moses, as author of a creation account.

However, from the description of Mochos’ atomistic view in ancient sources outside Iamblichus, it is clear that not all ancient authorities subscribed to Iamblichus’ view that Mochos and Moses were one and the same. This becomes even clearer if Damascius’ late-antique description of Mochos’ cosmogonic mythology is taken into account (*De principiis* 3.3.2; 5th/6th cent. AD). Nevertheless, the evidence from

⁴² See also Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 3.126A, where Sanchuniathon and Mochos are mentioned together as the historians of Phoenicia.

⁴³ On Galen and Moses’ creation account, see Tieleman 2005.

Iamblichus on Pythagoras' period of study among the descendants of Mochos/Moses, combined with that of Hermippus and Antonius Diogenes on the close connection between Pythagoras and the Jews, shows that a common identity between Mochos and Moses could be established by some, just as Alexander Polyhistor and Numenius did not disapprove of identifying Moses and Musaeus.

3. IAO IN PAGAN GREEK WRITINGS

Having analysed the varied reception which Moses received from pagan Greek authors, I shall now focus on the question of whether these sources show any awareness of the name of Moses' God. We have already come across three relevant instances. (1) First, in first-century BC Rome Alexander Polyhistor included information from Artapanus in his encyclopaedic ethnography, regarded Moses as identical with Musaeus, and narrated at some length the story of God's revelation to Moses. The account describes the powerful impact of the name of the Lord of the universe on the Egyptian king and his entourage as soon as this name was uttered or read from a tablet. (2) Secondly, Diodorus Siculus, a near-contemporary of Alexander Polyhistor, designates the name of Moses' God as Iao, and considers Moses to have ascribed his self-made laws to his God, in accordance with the general custom among ancient peoples. (3) Thirdly, Strabo interprets the Jewish God as 'the nature of all that exists', thereby probably alluding to the ontological meaning of his name. (4) Fourthly, like Diodorus Siculus, Philo of Byblos also mentions the name 'Iao', this time in the form of Ieuo, whose priest Hierombolus is named as the source of Sanchuniathon's history of the Jews, allegedly written before the Trojan War. (5) And fifthly, Numenius shows himself aware of the ontological meaning of Yahweh's name.

Other passages in pagan Greek writers which refer to the name of Moses' God can be added to the list. (6) The first-century medical author Dioscorides mentions Iao's name in a prayer in a work by the name of *On the Peony* (*Περὶ παιωνίας*). Dioscorides, who studied under Areius of Tarsus, was known mainly for his extensive *De materia medica*, in which he lists the effects of drugs employed in medicine and alludes to products of Judaea (Stern, Nos. 179–184). In this context, he gives the characteristics of herbs, minerals, and animal products. Although *De materia medica* is characterized as 'relatively free of

supernatural elements, reflecting keen, critical observation of how drugs react,⁴⁴ it is clear that Dioscorides did not entirely reject the supernatural; in the passage in question in *On the Peony* (not mentioned in Stern), Dioscorides implores God as follows: 'Wherever I am in the cosmos, which is subject to me, be thou with me, lord God Iao, Iao' (edn. Zuretti 1934, 166: ὅπου ἄν εἶμι ἐν κόσμῳ ὅς ἐστιν ὑπήκοός μοι, ἔστω μετ' ἐμοῦ, κύριε Θεὲ Ἰάω Ἰάω). This passage shows the degree to which Iao's name was known among the Greeks, and was also invoked by them. This also happens frequently in (7) the Greek magical papyri in late antiquity.⁴⁵

Another occurrence of Iao's name is found in (8) the remaining fragments of Varro, the great Roman scholar from the first-century BC. In a fragment which probably formed part of his *On Human and Divine Matters of Antiquities*, in which he studies the human construction of the divine, Varro says 'that among the Chaldaeans, in their mysteries, he (i.e. the God of the Jews) is called "Iao"' (Varro, edn. B. Cardauns, frg. 17; Stern, No. 75). This passage from Varro, preserved in the sixth-century Lydus from Constantinople, is directly followed in Lydus by a reference to (9) Philo of Byblos, according to whom—Lydus says—'Iao, in the Phoenician tongue, refers to the noetic light' (Lydus, *De mensibus* 4.53 = *FGrH* 790, frg. 7; Stern, No. 324). This addition shows that Philo of Byblos indeed appears to have known the Jewish God not only as 'Ieuo' (as we have seen above; Stern, No. 323), but also as 'Iao'. The actual fragment from Varro serves to underscore the fact that in the first century BC the

⁴⁴ Riddle 1996, 483–4.

⁴⁵ See the many occurrences in Preisendanz 1928–31, 2 vols, Nos. 1–8, 10, 12–13, 15, 19a, 22ab, 28b, 35–36, 61, 67, 71, 78. See also the *Anthologiae Graecae Appendix: Oracula*, epigram 135 (edn. Cougny 1890), and the *Hymni Anonymi e Papyris Magicis Collecti*, frg. 5 (edn. Heitsch 1963). On the Jewish elements in the magical papyri, see Smith 1996. It is important to notice Gager's observation in this respect: 'the distinction between Jewish and pagan in many cases presents a false alternative. The magical papyri and amulets reveal such a complex interpenetration of different religious vocabularies and ideas that traditional distinctions break down under the overwhelming weight of syncretism. From the perspective of descriptive analysis it is often more accurate to speak of the Jewish or Greek contribution to a syncretistic document than to limit one's assessment of the document as a whole to Jewish or Greek. (. . .) certain individual terms like Iao, Adonai, Sabaoth, and Moses were so embedded in the vocabulary of syncretistic magic that they became permanent elements of the environment and thus were no longer strictly Jewish' (Gager 1972, 136).

information about the name of the Jewish God found its way into various encyclopaedic works: not only those by Alexander Polyhistor and Diodorus Siculus as discussed above, but also Varro himself.

Later in pagan sources, the name Iao is also attested in (10) the fifth-century AD author Macrobius (1.18.19), who claims to have derived this name from the third-century AD history of Romano-Etruscan religion by Cornelius Labeo (Stern, No. 445). In his work *On the Oracle of Apollo of Claros*, Cornelius Labeo discusses a remarkable oracle that called Iao the highest God and characterized him, in winter, as Hades, in spring as Zeus, in summer as Helios, and in autumn as the graceful Iao.⁴⁶ This is another instance of the general development in which the name Iao, while barely featuring in Jewish texts, becomes more and more widespread in non-Jewish texts, whether it be pagan accounts of Judaism, pagan theological texts based on theocracy (such as the Clarian oracle in Cornelius Labeo), Gnostic Christian texts, Orthodox Christian writings, or magical papyri.⁴⁷

From all these instances it becomes clear that the name Iao was fairly well-known in the Graeco-Roman world. Sometimes Iao was also explicitly coupled with the figure of Moses, as we can see from Alexander Polyhistor and Diodorus Siculus. For this reason Celsus even regards Moses as the actual name-giver of the Jewish God. Moses, he says, 'acquired a name for divine power': ὄνομα δαιμόνιον ἔσχεν Μωϋσῆς (Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.21; Stern, No. 375). The high degree to which Moses was known is underlined by the fact that the Roman rhetorician Quintilian in *The Orator's Education*, written in the second half of the first century AD, can refer to Moses simply

⁴⁶ On this text, see Stern 1980, vol. 2, 411–412; and Schäfer 1997, 52–53, with notes 124–130 on p. 232.

⁴⁷ For Gnostic Christian writers, see (the references in) Irenaeus, Origen, the *Testamentum Salomonis*, and Epiphanius. Orthodox Christian writers include Eusebius, Didymus Caecus, Basilus Caesariensis, Cyrillus Alexandrinus, Theodoretus, Joannes Chrysostomus, and Hesychius. Stern also considers the possibility that the name Iao influenced the emergence of the fable that the Jews worshipped a golden ass's head in their sanctuary. This fable comes to the fore in Mnaseas of Patara (Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.114; Stern, No. 28), Diodorus Siculus (*Library of History* 34–35, 1.3: 'a marble statue of a heavily bearded man seated on an ass, with a book in his hands'; Stern, No. 63), Apion (Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.80; Stern, No. 170), and Damocritus (Stern, No. 247). According to Stern, 'the fact that the name Iao, known also to pagan circles as the name of the God of the Jews, is similar in sound to the Egyptian word for ass probably contributed something to the emergence of the fable' (Stern 1974, vol. 1, 98).

as ‘the founder of the Jewish superstition’, without specifying his name, apparently assuming that this name would already be known to his public (3.7.21; Stern, No. 230). The same assumption is also made by Pseudo-Longinus, who refers to ‘the lawgiver of the Jews’, without mentioning him by name (*On the Sublime* 9.9; Stern, No. 148).⁴⁸

That Moses was a well-known figure in pagan circles is an important observation which is, for instance, not always sufficiently taken into account in New Testament studies. It means, for example, that when Paul speaks about Moses in his *Letter to the Romans*, his predominantly pagan-Christian readership at the time⁴⁹ will have been familiar with Moses not only through the Roman churches, but already in their pagan past. As pagans too they could have entertained an interest in Moses. As we have seen, particularly in Rome they could have come across Moses’ name in encyclopaedic works such as those by Alexander Polyhistor, Diodorus Siculus, and Varro. The same applies to Paul’s Corinthian epistles, the only other place in his surviving works where he mentions Moses by name. This correspondence was also mainly addressed to a Christian public of pagan origin. The many references to Moses and/or the Jewish God in pagan literature show that knowledge about this topic, if limited, was not restricted to Jewish circles.

Nevertheless, although Moses was such a well-known figure that authors such as Quintilian and Pseudo-Longinus could presuppose their readers to be familiar with him, knowledge of the actual identity of Moses’ God will have had its limitations. The most important

⁴⁸ Cf. Feldman 1993, chap. 8.1, 233–42: ‘The Portrayal of Moses by Pagan Writers’, esp. 240: ‘When Quintilian (3.7.21), at the end of the first century, refers to “the founder of the Jewish superstition,” he, like Pseudo-Longinus, does not deem it necessary to name him, because Moses was apparently well-known.’

⁴⁹ Paul’s Roman public was predominantly of pagan background, since the Jews, including the Christian Jews, had been expelled from Rome by Claudius in AD 49 (Suetonius, *Claudius* 25.4; Stern, No. 307); only after the death of Claudius in AD 54 were they able to return to Rome, but when Paul wrote his letter, in AD 56, the predominant ethnic identity of the Christian communities of Rome to which he wrote must still have been pagan rather than Jewish. Moses is mentioned in *Rom* 5.14, 9.15, 10.5, 10.19, and in the Corinthian epistles in *1 Cor* 9.9, 10.2 and *2 Cor* 3.7, 13, 15. In *2 Tim* 3.8 Moses is mentioned together with the two Egyptian magicians Jannes and Jambres, a tradition which also occurs in Graeco-Roman writers such as Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 30.11; Stern, No. 221: Moses, Jannes, and Lotapes), Apuleius (*Apology* 90; Stern, No. 361: Iohannes [= Jannes], Moses, and others), and Numenius (frgs. 9, 1c, 10a; Stern, Nos. 365–366: Jannes, Jambres and Moses/Musaeus).

reason for this seems to be the declining willingness of Jews to pronounce and invoke the name of Yahweh. It is very revealing to examine pagan reflections on the lack of readily available information about the Jewish God's identity. First of all, this ignorance was used to cast Judaism into disrepute, by highlighting its secretive, arcane character. According to Juvenal, those pagans who revere the Jewish Sabbath have contempt for the laws of Rome, but 'learn and practise and revere the Jewish law, and all that Moses handed down in his secret tome (*arcano volumine*), forbidding them to point out the way to anyone not worshipping by the same rites' (*Satires* 14.96–103; Stern, No. 301). As Stern observes, 'In labelling the Book of Moses a "secret" work, Juvenal is casting on Judaism the disrepute that attached to esoteric religious societies, while pointing out the danger inherent in its exercise'.⁵⁰ In this way, by implicitly comparing Judaism with mystery religions, Juvenal was able to make sense of the lack of knowledge about the Jewish religion, including, we may assume, the name of the god worshipped.

Secondly, a different, more sophisticated strategy used by pagan authors to account for their ignorance regarding the name of the Jewish god involves the concept of the anonymous and unknown God. The first to stress the anonymity of the Jewish God in the evidence still extant is Livy. His view on these matters has only come down to us in reports by later writers, but these show that, according to Livy, the Jews 'do not state to which deity the temple at Jerusalem pertains' (Stern, No. 133: *Hierosolimis fanum cuius deorum sit non nominant*), so that 'the god worshipped there is unknown (*ἄγνωστος*)' (Stern, No. 134). Interestingly, Livy virtually explicitly says that pagan ignorance of the identity of the Jewish God is due to the reluctance of the Jews themselves to state which deity they worship.

The first-century AD author Lucan is probably dependent on Livy, when he states (from the perspective of Pompey) in *The Civil War (Pharsalia)*: 'My standards overawe Cappadocia, and Judaea given over to the worship of an unknown god' (*incertus deus*; 2.592–593; Stern, No. 191). Or, as Lucan is paraphrased in Lydus: 'In conformity with Livy Lucan says that the temple of Jerusalem belongs to an uncertain god (*Ὁ Λούκανος ἀδήλου θεοῦ τὸν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ναὸν εἶναι λέγει*)' (Stern, No. 367). The fact that the Jewish God is

⁵⁰ Stern 1980, vol. 2, 107: commentary on *Satires* 14.102.

called an 'incertus deus' (ἄδηλος θεός) underlines, as Stern puts it, that 'there was no specific name for him in post-biblical times'.⁵¹

In a similar way, the fourth-century AD authors of the *Historia Augusta* refer to the Jewish God as an 'incertum numen', an uncertain divinity. The context is a discussion about the maximum of man's longevity:

the most learned of the astrologers hold that 120 years have been allotted to man for living and assert that no one has ever been granted a longer span; they even tell us that Moses alone, the friend of God, as he is called in the books of the Jews, lived for 125 years, and that when he complained that he was dying in his prime, he received from an unknown god (*ab incerto numine*), so they say, the reply that no one should ever live longer (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae: Divus Claudius* 2.4; Stern, No. 526).

Livy, Lucan and the authors of the *Historia Augusta* talk about the Jewish God as an unknown, uncertain god. In Dio Cassius, this is cast in terms of the philosophical consideration that God is even unnameable (cf. Geljon, this vol., §1 on Philo, and at the end of §2 on Gregory of Nyssa). According to Dio Cassius, the Jews do not have a statue of their god in the temple of Jerusalem, but believe him to be 'unnameable and invisible': ἄρρητον δὲ δὴ καὶ ἀειδῆ αὐτὸν νομίζοντες εἶναι (*Roman History* 37.17.2; Stern, No. 406). It is probably this point that the sixth-century AD scholiast Lactantius Placidus wishes to emphasize, in his discussion of the nature of the Highest God. To support his view that the name of the Highest God cannot be known, he refers, inter alia, to the authority of 'Moses, the priest of the Highest God' (Stern, No. 553). In short, all these authors show that Graeco-Roman authors could interpret their lack of knowledge about the name of the Jewish God in terms of the well-established concept of the uncertain, unknown, unnameable God.⁵²

Authors who did have knowledge about the name of the God of the Jews demonstrate, as we have seen, that this name was applied

⁵¹ Stern 1974, vol. 1, 439. Stern also points out that the 'concept of *di incerti* is found already in Varro's terminology, where he used it for those gods of whom he had no clear knowledge (. . .). Varro did not, however, include the Jewish God among the *incerti*.' Indeed, as we have seen above, Varro calls him 'Iao' (Varro, frg. 17 edn. Cardauns; Stern, No. 75).

⁵² On the concept of the unknown God, which is also applied in Acts 17:23, see Norden 1913; Gärtner 1955, chap. 9, 242–247; Des Places 1959; Wycherley 1968; Van der Horst 1988 and 1989; Henrichs 1994; and Carabine 1995.

in magic (see Alexander Polyhistor on the Name's magical influence and, explicitly, the Greek magical papyri),⁵³ prayers (Dioscorides), 'mysteries' (Varro: 'among the Chaldaeans, in their mysteries'), and oracles (Cornelius Labeo). The link between the name 'Iao' and magic seems to be an instance of the much wider association of Jews with magical practices in Antiquity. According to Pliny the Elder, there is a 'branch of magic, derived from Moses, Jannes, Lotapes and the Jews' (*Natural History* 30.11; Stern, No. 221; cf. Burnyeat, this vol., §2 note 20), and Apuleius mentions Moses by name among other prominent magicians (*Apology* 90; Stern, No. 361). Likewise, Celsus points out that the Jews 'are addicted to sorcery, of which Moses was their teacher' (Celsus apud Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.26 and cf. 5.41; Stern, No. 375), Lucian of Samosata talks about foolish people who 'fall for the spells of Jews' (*Tragopodagra* 173; Stern, No. 374), and Damascius narrates the story of the wife of the Neoplatonist philosopher Hierocles, from whom a bad spirit was expelled by the invocation of 'the rays of the sun and the God of the Hebrews' (Stern, No. 547; cf. also Van den Berg, this vol., §§3–5 on Origen and the Neoplatonists on the power of divine names in magical spells). This kind of acknowledgement of the power which the Jewish God exerts over spirits seems also to be reflected in Porphyry's statement about the 'one true God, the creator and the king prior to all things, before whom tremble heaven and earth and the sea and the hidden places beneath, and the very divinities shudder; their law is the Father whom the holy Hebrews greatly honour' (Porphyry apud Augustine, *The City of God* 19.23; Stern, No. 451). As Augustine, who preserves this passage, remarks: 'In this oracle of his own god Apollo, Porphyry cites the God of the Hebrews as being so great that the very divinities shudder before him'. In all likelihood, this prominence of the Jewish God in magical applications, prayers, mysteries, and oracles has chiefly to do with the importance attributed to his name.

⁵³ Cf. Feldman 1993, chap. 8.4, 285–7: 'Moses the Magician', esp. 287: 'In particular, it is Moses' alleged knowledge of the Divine Name (*Papyri Magicae Graecae* 5.108–18) and of the Divine mysteries which made him so important. Thus, knowledge of the Divine name was thought to make possible the performance of miracles'.

4. SABAOTH IN PAGAN GREEK WRITINGS

In Hebrew Jewish writings, as well as ‘Yahweh’, the God of the Jews was also often called ‘Yahweh Sabaoth’ in full. Although this name never occurs in pagan writings in its full, composite form as ‘Iao Sabaoth’, ‘Sabaoth’ does indeed occur by itself on several occasions. An examination of these passages will conclude our investigation into Greek familiarity with the revelation of God’s name to Moses.

The first surviving evidence seems to be contained in the passage from Varro and Philo of Byblos in the sixth-century AD author Lydus, which has already been discussed (Stern, Nos 75 & 324). Lydus not only supplements his fragment from Varro on Iao with the explanatory remark that Philo of Byblos regards ‘Iao’ as a Phoenician name referring to the noetic light.⁵⁴ He also adds that Iao ‘is also often called Sabaoth,’ which stands for ‘he who is above the seven celestial spheres, i.e. the creator’: καὶ Σαβαὼθ δὲ πολλαχοῦ λέγεται, οἷον ὁ ὑπὲρ τοὺς ἑπτὰ πόλους, τουτέστιν ὁ δημιουργός (*FGrH* 790, frg. 7).

A very striking case, further, is offered by Plutarch in a discussion, in his *Table-Talk*, on the question: ‘Who is the God of the Jews?’ In this discussion, one proponent, the Athenian Moeragenes, argues that Dionysus and the God of the Jews have much in common, are in fact even identical, as is apparent when their rites and festivals are subjected to phenomenological comparison. Their similarities, Plutarch’s proponent argues, relate also to the Jewish Sabbath: ‘Even the feast of the Sabbath is not completely unrelated to Dionysus’ (*Table Talk* IV.6, 671C–672C; Stern, No. 258). This identification between the Jewish God and Dionysus (or Liber Pater, the Italian god of fertility and wine, commonly identified with Dionysus) is also made in Tacitus (*Histories* 5.5; Stern, No. 281), and in Cornelius Labeo: ‘the explanation of the deity and the name by which Iao is denoted Liber Pater and the sun [is] expounded by Cornelius Labeo in a book entitled *On the Oracle of Apollo of Claros*’ (Cornelius Labeo apud Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.18.18, 21; Stern, No. 445).

The logic which underlies this identification of the Jewish God with Dionysus is apparently as follows, as Herbert Hoffleit explains:

⁵⁴ On this Platonist concept of the true, noetic light, see Van Kooten 2005a, 151–62, esp. 156–7 on the passage in Lydus under consideration.

When the Hebrews spoke of *Sabaoth* (. . .) they would seem to a Greek to be referring to *Sabazios* or *Sabos*, who was identified with Dionysus. The Romans in 139 BC put themselves on record officially as guilty of the same confusion by expelling the Jews for allegedly introducing Sabazios to Rome.⁵⁵

The later observation is based on Valerius Maximus, according to whom praetor Cnaeus Cornelius Hispalus, who had 'ordered the astrologers by an edict to leave Rome and Italy', also 'compelled the Jews, who attempted to infect the Roman customs with the cult of Jupiter Sabazius, to return to their homes' (*Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 1.3.3; Stern, No. 147b).⁵⁶ Stern summarizes this explanation of the interchangeability of Sabaoth and Sabazios as follows: 'the similarity of the name Sabazius to that of the Jewish Sabaoth (. . .) induced an identification with the Jewish God'. Yet he also mentions the possibility of explaining 'the connection between the Jewish God and Sabazius by the conception of Sabazius as the God of the Sabbath'.⁵⁷ In any case, in Greek sources, not only could Moses be identified with Musaeus and Mochos, Yahweh himself was thought to share a common identity with Jupiter Sabazius and Dionysus.

That this is possible from the Greek perspective is confirmed by passages from Varro and Celsus. Varro, as Augustine reports, 'thought the God of the Jews to be the same as Jupiter, thinking that it makes no difference by which name he is called (*nihil interesse censens, quo nomine nuncupetur*), so long as the same thing is understood' (Varro apud Augustine, *On the Agreement of the Evangelists* 1.22.30; Stern, No. 72b). According to Celsus, 'The Goatherds and shepherds (the Jews, that is) thought that there was one God called the Most High, or Adonai, or the Heavenly One, or Sabaoth.' In Celsus' view, however, 'it makes no difference whether one calls the supreme God by the name used among the Greeks, or by that, for example, used among the Indians, or by that among the Egyptians' (Celsus apud Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.24; Stern, No. 375). Or as Origen reports Celsus' view elsewhere: 'it makes no difference whether we call Zeus the Most High, or Zen, or Adonai, or Sabaoth, or Amoun like the Egyptians, or Papaeus like the Scythians' (5.41; Stern, No. 375).

⁵⁵ Hoffleit 1969, 364–5 note *a*.

⁵⁶ See also Williams 1998, 98 (transl.) and 192 note 61 (comments), with reference to Lane 1979.

⁵⁷ Stern 1974, vol. 1, 359.

Origen's reaction and the background to Celsus' view is the topic of Robbert van den Berg's paper in this volume. It will suffice here to underline that identifications between Yahweh Sabaoth and Dionysus were considered possible on the general principle that, in the final instance, all (major) gods bear one and the same identity.⁵⁸ For the same reason, pagan Greeks also made abundant use of the names Iao, Sabaoth, and Adonai, as is shown by the Greek magical papyri.⁵⁹

5. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has focused on the Graeco-Roman knowledge of Moses and the name of his God, Iao, Sabaoth, or Adonai. These names are specifically Jewish designations for God, yet they were apparently known to, and even taken over by Greeks.⁶⁰ Moses and the name of his God did not remain hidden in the Greek world. In pagan sources, this disclosure did not occur exclusively, or even predominantly, in an anti-Semitic context. The entire reception of Moses and the name of his God was greatly varied. Graeco-Roman authors were vague and inconsistent in such matters; they had no need for consistency. Apart from negative interpretations in primarily Egyptian sources, and ample applications in magic, Moses and his God also received a remarkably positive reception in authors who stressed

⁵⁸ On the various ways in which Iao was incorporated into the pagan Graeco-Roman pantheon, see also Bohak 2000, 4–11.

⁵⁹ For 'Sabaoth', see Preisendanz 1928–31, 2 vols, Nos. 2–10, 12–13, 13a, 15–16, 18a, 21, 22ab, 28ab, 32a, 35–36, 42–43, 47, 59, 67. Cf. also Zosimus of Panopolis (fl. c. AD 300), author of a book on the God of the Hebrews, the Lord of Powers Sabaoth (edn. Berthelot & Ruelle 1888), the *Hymni Anonymi e Papyris Magicis Collecti*, frg. 5 (edn. Heitsch 1963) and particular astrological writings accessible via TLG searches. For 'Adonai', see Celsus in Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.24 and 5.41; Preisendanz 1928–31, 2 vols, Nos. 1–5, 7–8, 10, 12–13, 22b, 28c, 32a, 35–36, 43, 57, 62, 68; the *Hymni Anonymi e Papyris Magicis Collecti*, frg. 5 (edn. Heitsch 1963); and several astrological writings in the TLG corpus.

⁶⁰ This study could be further extended to other designations for God which were frequent among the Jews: Pantokrator and Theos Hypsistos. Although these terms were not specifically Jewish, and even originated in Greek writings, Jews seem to have had a specific preference for them, and this intensity in itself became influential in the Greek world. On 'Theos Hypsistos', see Mitchell 1999, esp. §5, 110–15: 'Theos Hypsistos and the Jews'. See, e.g., 112: 'most "pagan" or "Jewish" examples of the term Theos Hypsistos are formally indistinguishable from one another', and 114: 'We are evidently dealing with an area of belief where Jews, judaizers, and pagans occupied very similar territory.'

Moses' outstanding wisdom and philosophical, aniconic theology (Hecataeus; Diodorus Siculus; Strabo), identified him with no lesser than Musaeus (Alexander Polyhistor; Numenius), made Pythagoras dependent on the mysteries of Moses-Mochos (Iamblichus), and characterized Moses' God, in an ontological way, as 'He who is' (Numenius), as 'the noetic light' (Philo of Byblos), and 'the highest God' (Cornelius Labeo); they considered him unnameable and invisible (Dio Cassius), called him the 'one true God' (Porphyry), 'He who is above the seven celestial spheres, i.e. the creator' (Philo of Byblos), and named him not only 'Iao' and 'Sabaoth' but also 'Dionysus' (Plutarch) and 'Jupiter Sabazius' (Valerius Maximus). What is perhaps most remarkable about this positive reception is that we are surprised about it.⁶¹

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