Lifting the cloak of invisibility: identifying the Jews of late antique Egypt

4 Lifting the Cloak of Invisibility

Identifying the Jews of Late Antique Egypt

Arietta Papaconstantinou

The revolts of 115–117 were a watershed in the history of the Jewish community of Egypt. Trajan's ruthless repression left a strong impression in contemporary sources and paved the way for what Martin Goodman has called Hadrian's "final solution" some 18 years later.[1] Indeed, Appian maintained that in his time (referring to AD 117), "the Roman emperor Trajan was exterminating the Jewish race in Egypt."[2] The historiographical tradition on Judaism in Graeco-Roman Egypt has traditionally focused on the Ptolemaic and early Roman periods and rarely gone beyond Hadrian—the foremost example being Joseph Mélèze Modrzejewski's classic *The Jews of Egypt from Rameses II to Emperor Hadrian*. Ancient historians are routinely wary of sweeping statements like Appian's in their sources, especially when other ancient sources are a little more nuanced. In this case, however, the papyri were seen as a complement that confirmed Appian's account. In the first volume of the *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, which in 1957 initiated the collection of all published Jewish papyri, Victor Tcherikover wrote:

> We are fairly safe in assuming that in many places the Jewish population was totally annihilated, while in others some Jewish families may have survived. An *argumentum ex silentio* confirms our supposition: Jews vanish almost entirely from our sources.[3]

In his *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, Roger Bagnall discussed this lack of visibility in the sources, but without coming to a definite conclusion about the extent of the damage:

> There is no way of estimating the extent of the slaughter and enslavement inflicted on the Jewish community by the Roman authorities, but it was decisive and permanent. Whatever remained is largely invisible in the documentation, and the one criterion generally used to identify Jews in the period after 117, nomenclature, cannot bear the weight put upon it.[4]

Thus for Bagnall, the absence of evidence is not categorical evidence of absence: this invisibility, however, makes it impossible to write even a cursory history of the Jewish community between 117 and the fourth century, when unequivocal

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evidence for Jews in Greek papyri appears again. Tcherikover saw that as a resurgence, "the beginning of a new development, reflecting the social and cultural atmosphere of the 'Middle Ages' rather than that of the classical world."[5]

What I would like to do here is not to discuss the presence or not of Jews between 117 and the Arab conquest, an exercise that has been attempted several times already from different vantage points,[6] but rather—in line with the volume's focus—to explore the criteria used to attempt to identify them in the sources. It is possible to classify the extant usable evidence into three broad categories:

a) Self-indexing. As Bagnall notes in the passage earlier, personal names have been very prominent in research as a marker. Indeed, personal names are a blatant form of self-indexing, although they do not always index what historians are trying to find. I shall come back to personal names more at length later. There seems to be no self-indexing within letters or documents of the sort that has been taken apart so diligently concerning pre-Constantinian Christians, something which contributes to the impression of a lack of evidence. Only the case of an oath "by Har Gerizim" (μὰ τὸν Ἀργαριζίν), the Samaritan holy precinct, in a fifth-century letter can be seen as an equivalent form of self-indexing by the author.[7] Visual self-indexing, on the other hand, has been generally neglected. As it is not documentary, visual evidence has not made it into the conversation, except when accompanied by text in the case of inscriptions. Linguistic change and the renewed use of Hebrew for intra-communal communication is also an important form of self-indexing.
b) External reference. Most of the evidence from Greek papyri falls into this category: individuals mentioned in transactions or registers who are explicitly identified as Jews in the relevant documents. From the fourth century to the eighth, I have counted 25 late antique papyri describing one or more individuals either as Ἰουδαῖος (14 times, from the fourth to the sixth century), Ἑβραῖος (9 times, from the late sixth century onwards), or Σαμαρίτης (3 times, in the fifth and sixth centuries). The total of these occurrences is 26 because one document of 569 describes an individual both as Ἑβραῖος τῷ ἔθνει and as Ἰουδαῖος.[8]
c) Proxy and circumstantial evidence. The most obvious are the existence of texts identified as Jewish and the presence of synagogues. Texts, especially in Greek, have been a contested area, but the rising awareness among classical papyrologists of texts in Hebrew has significantly modified the picture. Of course the renewed use of Hebrew also has important implications beyond its role as an indicator of the presence of Jews, as indicated under item a).

All that evidence has mostly been known and used for some time now. Because of disciplinary boundaries, however, it has not been systematically brought together, and a number of historiographical traditions and assumptions have guided the analysis of what evidence has been collected or identified. What follows is not an exposition of that evidence, but an attempt to weigh the relevance of each of the three categories. I shall focus more at length on the issue of self-indexing, which

is not only central to this volume but also the one that has been most routinely dismissed as "impossible." First, however, I shall briefly present some thoughts on the historiography of the question.

Historiographical ambiguities

In a recent article, Tal Ilan took apart Tcherikover's approach to the source material gathered in the *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum (CPJ)* and the narrative underpinning it.[9] The wish to create a story of cultural assimilation followed by destruction, which they explicitly compared to the rise of European anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, and its aftermath, led Tcherikover and his collaborators to ignore texts that were not in Greek and to give much less weight to the period after 117. In the words of Ilan,

> This is where in the 1950s, when Tcherikover and his colleagues wrote their commentary on this corpus, they thought the story should end. Thus, they were really not very interested in telling us the rest of the story. For them there was no possibility for a Jewish revival on Egyptian soil.[10]

The impression that Jewish life collapsed after 117 is in fact strongly—if not primarily—a function of the lack of high literary evidence in Greek and of references in the canonical Graeco-Roman sources. In most cases, the Hellenized Alexandrian community of the Ptolemaic and early Roman periods has dominated the scholarly horizon of Egyptian Judaism, and the end of that literary high culture has been linked to the events of 117. Yet as Ilan notes, the break in literary activity happened well before 117 and is most probably connected to the rise of Christianity rather than to political events.[11] High culture still maintains a tenacious hold on the way historians understand and construct the life of "communities." I shall attempt to show that if we compare like with like, papyri taken alone give a much less dramatic picture.

Moreover, next to texts in Greek making reference to Jews, there are also the texts in Aramaic and Hebrew that Tcherikover chose to exclude from the *CPJ*. According to him, the choice of Hebrew as a language of communication was a deliberate strategy "aiming at the abolition of foreign habits and their replacement by a national mode of life,"[12] and this Hebraisation marked a new start: "The Jewish community in Egypt underwent a profound change, turning definitely from the Graeco-Roman form of organization and adopting the Jewish one."[13] The juxtaposition of Tcherikover's very interesting thoughts on the Hebrew and Aramaic texts and their importance for understanding forms of communal organization with his contention that "the community" was annihilated show that he was mainly thinking of the Hellenized community and not of Jews in general.

Yet the evidence provided by Hebrew and Aramaic papyri is crucial, because as Ilan points out, they are the most obviously *Jewish* texts[14]—and thus not only attest to Jewish presence but offer an inside view. A group of Hebrew and Aramaic papyri in the Bodleian Library, including one found in Oxyrhynchos in 1897, was

published in 1903 by A.E. Cowley, and he tentatively dated most of them to the sixth century or earlier.[15] In 1915, he published another group of papyri found in the 1905 Oxyrhynchos excavation, for which he gave an approximate date of around 400. At least one of the Oxyrhynchos fragments, however, may date as early as the third century.[16] More texts have been published since, including the well-known *ketubah* of 417 from Antinoopolis,[17] and they are, of course, essential for understanding Jewish life in Egypt in the period between 117 and the Geniza.[18]

What is perhaps the most striking aspect of these documents is their variety. Alongside literary texts we find Hebrew and Aramaic also used for everyday communication—even sometimes simple greetings—and business transactions, and used by both men and women.[19] This has sometimes been attributed to immigration from Palestine, which is also used to explain the resurgence of the Jewish community—especially as several Palestinian Jews are mentioned in papyri. Yet the simplest explanation is surely Tcherikover's, namely that after the various calamities of 117 and 132, the Jewish communities of the area should "cling together," as he put it.[20] The renewed use of Hebrew and Aramaic and the development of a more distinctly Jewish identity in writing would have been a natural development of that proximity, reinforced by real and perceived external enmity.[21]

Disappearance or contraction?

The *CPJ* created a received truth which has colored scholarly approaches to the question ever since. On the whole, Greek evidence has primed in most of the scholarship, and the verdict of "invisibility" has remained uncontested. Yet even here, when one looks more closely, things seem less clear-cut. Let us look at some (very) raw numbers (meaning indicative numbers, not properly weighed statistics) with the help of the Duke Database.[22]

The term ἑβραῖος in different forms appears nine times, all after AD 150—in fact all in the sixth century and after. As for ἰουδαῖος, it appears 182 times from the third century BC to the eighth century AD. After AD 150 we have only 30 hits, while there are 152 before AD 150. The latter number, however, includes more than 70 documents from a single find, documenting the levy of the Jewish tax in Edfu (*O.Edfu*). Without this bulk find, the number would be closer to 90 occurrences (which include several non-Egyptian documents, but not enough to skew the overall balance). If we calibrate these numbers by century, we have an average of 20 per century before AD 150 and 6 per century after AD 150. Thus even with a very crude calibration, the period after AD 150 (and thus after 117) has in fact yielded a centennial rate that is a little less than one third (0.3) of the centennial rate before AD 150. Within the period AD 150–800, the distribution is indeed tilted towards the later centuries, mainly the fourth century and after. The proportion is around 2:1, however, not as stark as it has been made to sound, and once again, this is attenuated if we calibrate this by the length of time covered: 14 occurrences in a century and a half, against 26 for a period of five centuries.

Thus by taking the time factor into account even in a very cursory way, the contrast in the documentation appears to be much less pronounced than has been

commonly stated. This certainly deserves a more thorough statistical analysis, but my aim here is rather to point out some methodological blind spots than to conduct a new study of the evidence. In any case, although there is indeed a contrast between the two periods, which is an indication of a certain contraction, that contrast is milder than seems at first sight and does not really point to annihilation or extermination.

Numbers of individuals mentioned in papyri are not population numbers, and this for a number of reasons—not least the very haphazard conservation of the documents and their not-very-representative distribution. There can also be more historically significant reasons, however—and this is where the issue of visibility comes in. It is not surprising, historically speaking, that the activation or indexing of a given identity should diminish drastically after a traumatic event, most often as part of a conscious or subconscious strategy of dissimulation and/or assimilation. Thus instead of assuming annihilation, we could be asking, with Guy Stroumsa, whether the fall in numbers is not the sign that the Jews of Egypt went "underground, disappearing only from our limited field of vision."[23] Cases of persecuted minorities adopting a less visible identity are abundantly documented historically and have been the subject of numerous studies.[24] For late Roman Egypt, it is impossible to document a similar phenomenon because of the less exhaustive nature of our sources, but such a reaction, at least in the century or so after the events, is not at all unlikely. I shall come back to this issue more at length when discussing self-indexing. This, of course, is not to deny the ruthlessness of the repression: that is precisely why such dissimulation would have been felt necessary. An event can be traumatic, however, without wiping out an entire population.

Visible communities

Circumstantial evidence is perhaps the least affected by choices of visibility or invisibility. There is also relatively little of it, but it bears some weight. For example, the oft-noted discussion in the Babylonian Talmud regarding the acceptability of reading the bible in Coptic is more significant than a simple anecdotal reference to Jews in Egypt. It not only offers evidence of the presence of a community but also shows that it had connections with rabbis elsewhere and that it must have included a good proportion of native Egyptians.[25] Moreover, it could also point to a tendency towards outward assimilation, as speaking Coptic and using Coptic bibles would make a community less conspicuous than doing so in Hebrew. There are indications that Jewish versions of the Greek bible circulated in the Theban area and that some of the Coptic translations of Old Testament books followed them rather than the Septuagint.[26] Although some such Coptic versions were used unambiguously by Christians, their existence could also point to precisely the type of communities alluded to in the Talmud.

The bulk of the material in *CPJ* III (which covers late antiquity) is made up of external references to Jews, which also dominate in the Greek papyri published since then. Even though they are not very high in numbers, many reflect the presence of organized communities and not merely isolated individuals carrying out

transactions or paying tax. It is therefore important to calibrate those references, noting whether they are collective or individual, or whether they otherwise imply a substantial presence.

For Oxyrhynchos, for example, we know there was a community already in the late third century, which had the necessary funds (14 talents of silver) to manumit a Jewish female slave and her children.[27] A document like this does, indeed, show that in the late third century "Jews appear again," but it also does more than that. A fully constituted community does not appear out of thin air, and its existence and relative financial ease indicate an institution that has been in place for some time. Tal Ilan has in fact argued that Jews could have come to Egypt from Palestine as a result of the Bar Kokhba revolt—some of them possibly returning to Egypt after having fled to Palestine in 117.[28] A *bouleutes* from Ono in Syria Palestine is mentioned as "father of the community" in 291, another indication of closer links with Palestine after 117.[29] In particular, new leaders could have come from Palestine, as it is likely that the leadership of the Egyptian community was the most heavily targeted group during the repression. The heads and the elders of a community (*kneseth*), as well as its members, are also mentioned in one of the Hebrew fragments found in 1905, a late fourth-century (?) letter sent to another community, presumably that of Oxyrhynchos where it was found.[30]

Although in 291 the term "συναγωγὴ" was used to describe a community rather than a building, this had changed by the fifth century. The existence of such a building in Alexandria is attested to by a group of individual dedications inscribed on two columns and a lintel, as well as a fragmentary plaque.[31] In the sixth century there was also a synagogue building on the lands of the Apions, who rented it out to the community. Their accounts record a payment towards the rent by "Lazar the Jew."[32] The fact that the building was not owned by the community and that it was in the countryside rather than the city could indicate that it was not the only synagogue in the Oxyrhynchite.

There is another collective reference to "the Jews" in Oxyrhynchos, in a list of payments that indicates they had "private" land and were involved in the production of goatskins and hides.[33] A fourth-century text from Oxyrhynchos mentions the κεφαλαιωτὴς of the Jews, as does a fifth- or sixth-century text from the Hermopolite.[34] The term can have different meanings, but here it appears to mean the head of a guild, which is a status that was attributed to the Jews collectively.[35] This becomes clear from a seventh-century ostracon from Edfu which lists the Jews among several other established bodies (captives, tapestry makers, and couriers) as contributors of *munera*.[36] Something related to "the Jews" also appears in a letter of unknown provenance dated 21 May 316, which is far too fragmentary to yield more information; yet it is again clear that the reference is to a group that was clearly identified by the author. Finally, a sixth-century sale for future delivery of 121 wine jars that held five "Jewish sextarii" each is again a sign that there was a well-constituted Jewish community with its own weight standards and sufficient consumption to warrant the production of specially made recipients.[37]

Collective external references to Jews are generally pragmatic. What is more difficult is to discern a pattern for the direct indexing of individual Jews in

transactions. In most cases where this happens they are transacting with non-Jews, and the epithet serves to mark their religion or ethnicity (at least once, the two are treated as separate). That does not mean, however, that every transaction between a Jew and a non-Jew identified the former as such. Non-indexing, especially in the case of informal transactions or when there was no ambiguity as to the person's identity, may well have been the norm. One would also presume that transactions between Jews did not use such markers and have therefore remained largely undetected. The divorce agreement *P.Herm*. 29 between two Samaritans, however, does mention their religion, even though both parties belong to the same group. This could be because the deed was drawn up by a non-Jew (or a non-Samaritan) and was to be registered in the Hermopolite archives. Religion was also important in matters of marriage and divorce, so its chance of being mentioned in such circumstances was certainly higher.[38]

Self-indexing

Virtually all the cases already cited would have involved some form of self-indexing, since even external reference to an identity necessarily means that identity is somehow embraced and stated, however minimally. Writing in Hebrew and Aramaic was one such form of Jewish self-indexing among contemporaries, even if for scholars it is primarily direct evidence. Contrary to the use of the Hebrew alphabet on public inscriptions, using the language in letters and documents or reading literary texts in Hebrew would have functioned mainly internally, as a sign of recognition between members of a community. The self-referential expression "our brothers the members of the community" in the Hebrew letter from Oxyrhynchos reflects this sense of belonging.[39]

One of the most obvious forms of self-presentation or indexing was not verbal, but visual. The use of identifiable Jewish symbols on objects of use or other media indicates the existence of a specific material culture referring to this identity. That material culture may have remained partly private: objects such as oil lamps, for instance, which are the most common finds with religious symbols in general, cannot tell us much about how far outside the domestic sphere this identity was advertised. Even lamps, however, were produced industrially, and it is unlikely that workshops specialized exclusively in the production of Jewish lamps, which implies that ordering or buying such lamps would have been a form of self-indexing, at least locally. Between the entirely private and the public are objects that were used within the community, for instance, during religious rituals or feasts. Breadstamps or incense burners with representations of menorahs would probably fall in this category[40]: a form of collective or mutual self-indexing within a given group, but not to outsiders.

Other visual signs were much more public. Objects of personal adornment such as pendants representing a menorah were a clear statement of identity.[41] The same is true of Jewish wine merchants who surrounded the dipinto of their name with a menorah on their amphorae.[42] The menorah was also used publicly on funerary inscriptions, where it appeared as an identifier, sometimes along with the lulab.[43]

They are sometimes accompanied by text in Hebrew—either just the name of the deceased[44] or a Hebrew prayer.[45] A Hebrew prayer could also be written on a mummy label, which, although more private than a stela, was nevertheless not entirely internal to the community.[46]

I shall now come to the criterion Bagnall saw as the one most commonly used, namely onomastics. Now names are a notoriously unreliable indicator of identity, especially at a distance of 15 centuries or more, because although their choice is always a form of identity statement, it is practically impossible to know which of several identities one is targeting with a personal name. Among other things, names could signify social status, regional origin, family history, or patronage bonds: they did not always unequivocally index religious or communal affiliation. In many societies they follow a restrictive set of conventions, deviations from which can be highly significant in terms of intra-group relations. It is impossible to know the degree of constraint for most historical societies, however, and this one in particular, as we have no written meta-narratives about traditional naming practices. Despite their unreliability, however, personal names remain universally recognized as a form of identity display and assignment.[47] Like language, they are quintessential modes of social positioning and self-ascription and are therefore difficult to dismiss when looking for such markers.

Until the rise of Christianity, it is possible to consider with a relatively high degree of certainty that biblical names found in documents referred to Jews. It is generally admitted that this criterion is no longer as reliable after Christians started using conspicuously Old Testament names, broadly from the fourth century onwards. Even before the rise of distinctively Christian anthroponyms, however, individuals with biblical names represented only a section of the Jewish population: the others bore common Greek, Roman, or even Egyptian names—in other words, they participated in the onomastic *koine* of their time. After biblical names started being used by Christians too, the use of Graeco-Roman and Egyptian names did not stop—and presumably neither did the use of biblical names. Nevertheless, the adoption of Old Testament names by Christians made Jews more invisible, because what used to be their distinctive names were distinctive no longer.

It is important to note at this point that the non-distinctiveness of personal names carries as much value as their distinctiveness. As I mentioned earlier, the choice to participate in the onomastic *koine* rather than mark oneself out can be a strategy of dissimulation and/or assimilation intended to conceal or suppress an identity perceived as dangerous or problematic or, more positively, to adopt a desired identity.[48] This is an especially common occurrence in the case of beleaguered communities who feel under threat.[49] The maintenance of dual names that are used in different circumstances, like a sort of diglossia, are also a common practice,[50] well known in Egypt in the case of Egyptians adopting Greek alternative names and also attested among Egyptian Jews. Closely linked to this is the practice of translating names from their original language into the dominant one—another practice that was common in Graeco-Roman Egypt.[51] Such names are often indistinguishable from those of the dominant language,

especially when they refer to virtues, like Eusebios, or gifts of god, like Theodotos or Dorotheos.

So, can one use names at all? In a famous article of 1982, Roger Bagnall used onomastics to assess the pace of the Christianisation of Egypt during the fourth century. He used the names found in documents with precise dates and defined a number of criteria that allowed him to identify Christian names. He observed that by the end of the century, those names had become dominant. A recent article (2013) by Willy Clarysse and Marc Depauw, based on what is now a broader digitized dataset of names, broadly corroborated Bagnall's calculations and curves marking the pace of growth of Christian names. The initial article, as well as the follow-up by Clarysse and Depauw, sparked several objections, which are mainly focused on definitional issues, as well as on the inherent difficulties of using quantification with papyri.[52]

Bagnall had defined Christian names as follows: Old and New Testament names; names formed on the Egyptian word *ntr*, "God"; names of Christian emperors; names based on abstract nouns and adjectives of theological content; and names of saints and martyrs. Without entering the discussion on Christianisation per se, I would like to discuss the first category of names in more detail, and more specifically the Old Testament names. Ewa Wipszyska only objected to the inclusion of Apollos as a biblical name[53]; Clarysse and Depauw discuss the category more fully, mainly regarding possibilities of statistical distortion. All seem to accept without discussion Bagnall's statement regarding the possibility of Old Testament names being Jewish:[54]

> 1) Old Testament and New Testament names. Many of these were also in use by Jews, but the drastic decrease in Jewish population in Trajan's suppression of their revolt, plus the fact that all of the documentation I am dealing with comes from the chora and not from Alexandria, leads me to exclude the possibility that these names are those of Jews. If a handful are, the results will not be altered in any substantial way. Among these names are (from the Old Testament) Aaron, Abraham, Daniel, David, Elias, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Miriam, Moses, Rebecca, Samuel, Susanna.[55]

For his purposes, Bagnall was right: Jews were without doubt not numerous enough to slant his results and do not affect his conclusions on Christianisation, with their revision of 1987. Nevertheless, the question of whether they represented only "a handful" and whether they were largely absent from the valley are assumptions that have now been shown to need some nuancing. There is a certain circularity in interpreting all potentially Jewish names as non-Jewish on the basis of a lack of Jewish presence in documents, if the possibility of identifying Jews in documents has been preemptively negated.

Yet it is a crucial point, because it bears on the perceived identity, if not the perceived *existence*, of Jews in Egypt. It does not affect how we study the Christianisation of the country, since the very notion of Christianisation is generally understood as a seesaw with traditional polytheism at the other end.[56] Judaism

has generally been left out of the equation, since it occupied the margins of both the pagan and the Christian religious landscapes. It is indeed true that after the rise of specifically Christian onomastics there were no longer any names that can be identified as unequivocally "Jewish." It is, however, deterministic always to resolve this ambiguity in the same direction. Moreover, this may well be only a historian's problem, while for contemporaries some names had a more Jewish connotation than others and were not chosen by Christians. We shall never know for sure, of course, but I do think it is not a lost cause.

As Clarysse and Depauw demonstrated, the large datasets at our disposal today make lists of names easier to produce and treat. There are several avenues one can take to attempt a finer analysis of that material. The various pointers I shall indicate next are, of course, underpinned by an assumption which is the opposite of the one that has long dominated, namely that there *were* Jewish communities in Egypt, including in the valley, throughout late antiquity and that they were to a large extent the descendants of the ones who went through the events of 117, even if migration also played a role in their revitalization. One must also take into consideration the possibility that at least some of that "migration" consisted of refugees from 117 returning home after things had settled down.[57] Taking this view means that some elements of the documentation can be interpreted differently, because ultimately, we only find something in our sources if we look for it.

The first criterion I would like to bring forth is based on Clarysse and Depauw's Table 4 and Table 9 (see Figure 4.1). These show the temporal distribution from the third century BC to the eighth century AD, respectively, of the biblical names used by Bagnall, and of other Christian names they have added, some of which are Old Testament names.[58] They note that the majority of those names become popular after AD 300, and some only appear after that date. This, to them, "confirms the validity of their use as indicators of the Christian faith of the parents when naming the child."[59] It is true that the appearance and/or popularity of those names from the fourth century onwards is attributable to the rise of Christianity, but this does not mean that they always reflect Christian affiliation. After all, these were now names that Jews could use as part of a onomastic *koine*, like they had used Gaius and Achilles before, precisely because Old Testament names were not exclusively Christian.

There are in those tables, however, also biblical names that were present before AD 300, and even in the Ptolemaic period. This shows that they were names traditionally borne by Jews, and thus very likely to have been used by them after AD 300 as well. Four of those names—Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Simeon—were in continuous use since the second century BC, while Samuel and Martha also appear early, but are much rarer and are not continuously attested. Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph became very popular among Christians, but their status as traditional Jewish names will certainly have meant that they were also commonly used by Jews. Simeon remains rare throughout the period, as do Samuel and Martha.

The rareness factor is, I believe, an important one. It reflects the balance of numbers and could indicate names that were perceived as Jewish and thus not borne by Christians. In Clarysse and Depauw's tables we consistently find Rebecca and

Table 4 Per mille of the total number of Greek DUKEREF entries for Old and New Testament names, from the 3rd cent. BC until the 8th cent. AD. Figures smaller than 0.05 per mille have been rounded off to zero and thus appear as '—'.

%0 of DUKEREFs	*−3*	*−2*	*−1*	*+1*	*+2*	*+3*	*+4*	*+5*	*+6*	*+7*	*+8*
Aaron	—	—	0.1	—	—	—	0.4	0.4	1.5	0.9	2.0
Abraham	—	—	—	0.1	—	—	0.3	6.3	14.5	11.8	8.3
Daniel	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.1	3.2	2.3	2.9	3.3
David	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.4	2.3	3.3	8.7
Elias	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.8	1.8	2.4	2.6	2.5
Isaac	—	0.1	0.3	0.5	—	—	1.3	10.2	13.0	8.1	11.7
Jacob	—	0.2	—	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.3	4.6	8.8	4.5	5.8
Joseph	—	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.3	—	0.5	9.9	12.3	9.9	7.3
Miriam	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.4	0.2	0.7
Moses	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.8	3.2	0.9	1.0	1.3
Rebecca	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.4	0.3	0.2
Samuel	0.2	0.1	—	—	—	—	—	2.8	1.5	0.8	2.8
Susanna	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.2
Andreas	—	—	—	0.2	—	0.1	0.6	2.9	4.3	2.6	9.3
Apollos	—	0.3	1.6	1.2	0.8	1.0	2.4	6.6	23.4	4.5	1.0
Bartholomeus	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.1	0.6	2.5
Johannes	—	0.2	—	0.1	0.3	0.1	2.3	29.4	49.8	40.7	36.5
Maria	—	—	—	—	0.1	0.1	0.9	3.9	7.0	6.3	2.0
Martha	—	—	0.9	—	—	—	0.1	0.7	0.8	1.0	0.5
Mattheus	—	—	—	—	—	0.6	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.7
Paulus	—	—	—	—	0.1	0.5	7.7	14.5	12.2	10.4	7.0
Petros	—	—	—	—	—	0.2	2.0	11.0	11.8	9.2	13.5
Stephanos	0.7	0.5	1.1	0.1	0.4	1.0	0.7	0.8	5.1	11.4	5.0
Sion	—	—	—	0.1	—	—	—	1.5	1.0	0.9	1.0

Figure 4.1 Overview of frequency Christian names.

Source: Tables 4 and 9 from W. Clarysse and M. Depauw. "How Christian was Fourth-Century Egypt? Onomastic Perspectives on Conversion." *Vigiliae Christianae* 67 (2013): 407–35.

Table 9 Per mille of the total number of Greek DUKEREF entries for other Christian names, from the 3rd cent. BC until the 8th cent. AD.

%0 of DUKEREFs	*−3*	*−2*	*−1*	*+1*	*+2*	*+3*	*+4*	*+5*	*+6*	*+7*	*+8*
Anastasios	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.3	2.0	4.0	1.0
(Mi)chael	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.4	0.4	1.1	5.3
Christo . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.1	0.4	3.0	4.5	1.7
Epiphanios	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.7	—
Georgios	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.3	10.1	29.9	25.9
Henoch	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.3	4.1	5.4	11.7
Ieremias	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.1	0.3	4.3	4.6	2.8
Kosmas	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.1	0.6	2.4	11.4	11.2
Kyriakos	—	—	—	—	—	—	6.7	0.4	4.0	2.9	3.2
Makarios	—	—	—	—	—	0.1	2.7	4.5	6.4	8.4	13.7
Menas	—	—	—	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	2.8	21.4	31.4	17.7
Sergios	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.2	0.3	2.1	7.9	1.7
Sim(e)on	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.4	—	—	0.1	0.4	1.5	3.0
Thomas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.3	1.3	2.2	6.2
Zacharias	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.1	1.3	2.2	10.8	12.0

Figure 4.1 (Continued)

Susanna under 1‰ and Miriam and Martha under 2‰, as well as Aaron, except in the eighth century, when the name nevertheless remains under 3‰. Symeon is under 1‰ until the seventh century, then under 2‰ until 700 and under 3‰ in the eighth century; Samuel, and surprisingly perhaps, Elias, are also consistently under 3‰. Some other rarely attested Old Testament names, not listed by Clarysse and Depauw, are Benjamin, Esdras, Jonathan, Judas, Leah, Reuben, Ruth, Sarah, and Solomon.

It is important to note, however, that Clarysse and Depauw only treated the Greek documents. The onomastics in Coptic documents have been left aside, presumably because they are not part of the database. The documents from the Theban area alone can considerably modify this picture, because they display a strong inclination towards Old Testament names in the local population. We see Susanna, Samuel, Sarah, and Solomon more often, but Jonathan, Leah, and Reuben just as rarely, and Symeon and Rebecca marginally more. We also find Esther, Judith, and Zebedee, names that do not appear in the Greek documents.[60]

It is, of course, difficult to conclude much from the rareness of names alone, even combined with their use prior to Christianity, especially without having taken regional distribution into account. However, there are two more pointers I think are important.

First there are the names of the Jews clearly identified by external reference from the fourth century onwards. Of 26 names of individuals described as Jews, 14 are Old Testament names. The most common is Joseph (four) followed by Abraham and Jacob (three each). Enoch, Eleazar, Joab, Judas, Isaac, Levi, Manasses, Moses, Rebecca, Samuel, and Simon appear once. We also have two with Semitic names (Aurelios Hanan and Johannes), one virtue name (Eusebios), and one gift-of-God name (Theodotos), which although in Greek, can be translations of Hebrew equivalents. The remaining names are either Greek or Egyptian—what Bagnall had called "neutral." Even though this sample cannot be statistically representative, it is striking—and consistent with my earlier comments—that the most common names are also common among Christians and that among the rest we also find several that are common Christian names (Moses, Enoch, Isaac), but also some that are on the rare side (Symeon, Samuel, Rebecca, Judas, Joab, Levi).

A final criterion that can be brought into play is the clustering of Old Testament names, especially within families. This can be tricky, considering the popularity of some of those names among Christians. I would contend, however, that the clustering of names that are known to have been used by Jews in late antiquity and that are otherwise rare, even if the cluster includes some more common names, is more likely to come from a Jewish milieu—especially if it is found in a place where Jewish communities are otherwise attested. Below I present some cases that illustrate this approach.

P.Cair.Masp. I 67089, which Leslie MacCoull described as a "Cinderella story," is in fact an affidavit testifying the free status of a woman called Martha, who was born of free servants in the author's household.[61] The following family tree (Figure 4.2) shows the onomastic pattern of her family, all born in the service of the same household, except her grandparents, who entered the previous master's service with an agreement.

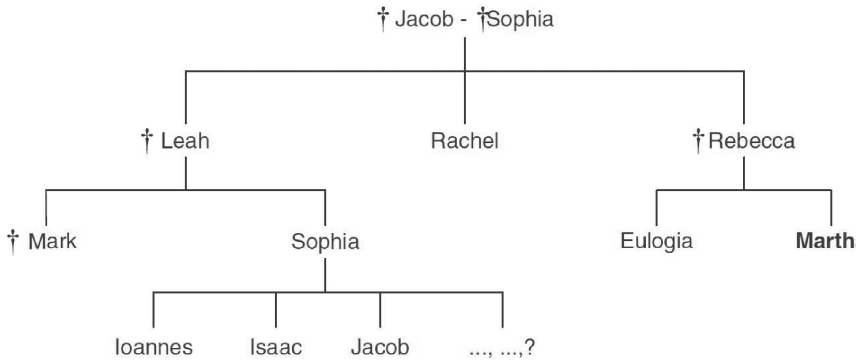

Figure 4.2 Martha's family tree.

Source: James Keenan, Joseph Manning, and Uri Yiftach-Firanko, *Law and Legal Practice in Egypt from Alexander to the Arab Conquest: A Selection of Papyrological Sources in Translation, with Introductions and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 468.

The first thing to note, considering what has been said earlier, are the names of the three sisters, the daughters of Jacob and Sophia. Although the parents have names that by the sixth century can be considered the new neutral, Rebecca, and especially Leah, are much rarer. Rachel is also not a very common name, although more so than Rebecca. Leah died "with her son," possibly in childbirth. Her daughter Sophia was named after her grandmother, married a free man, and had four children, for whom all preserved names can be classified as neutral. Rebecca's daughters were named Eulogia, also neutral, and Martha, another of the rare names. We are told that Rachel and Eulogia chose a monastic life, which has led scholars to consider this was a Christian family. In the context of domestic service to a Christian family, however, boundaries could be very fluid. It is not impossible that young servile women found in conversion and the adoption of an ascetic life a way out of their status, something for which historical examples abound. Marrying a free man may also have meant a Christian and involved a change in religious affiliation. It is, of course, impossible to be sure, but the possibility should be considered.

There are a few other cases of women called Leah. One is Aurelia Leah, daughter of Dioskoros and Leah, who signs a debt acknowledgement in 449 to the *riparios* of Hermoupolis.[62] We know Jews took the name Dioskoros; as for Leah, these are two of a total of seven attestations in Greek (spelled Λία or Λεία). Interestingly, the *amanuensis* is called Aurelios Pinoution, son of Annas (Hanan, or possibly Ananias)—one neutral and one relatively rare name. The other cases of Leah are one who is a daughter of David appearing in an eighth-century register in Aphrodito[63]; another is the mother of David, son of Abraham, who signs a land lease in 545 or 560 in the Hermopolite[64]; yet another Leah in the Hermopolite, daughter of Ammonios and ?, was party to a contract in 544[65]; and finally in Arsinoe in 546, an

Aurelia Martyria, daughter of Phoibammon, has as her alternative name Leah.[66] This last practice is, as we have seen, typical of a double cultural allegiance and may well indicate someone from a mixed marriage.

Another interesting case is a settlement agreement from seventh-century Thebes between George, also known as Elisha, son of Peter, and Mishael and Rebecca, and their son, "another Elisha" (Ἐλισαῖος ἄλλος), regarding a debt owed by the former to the latter.[67] The document is witnessed by Apa Petros as well as Jonathan, son of Ioa(?), and Esdras, son of Isaac. Μιζαὴλ and Ἔσδρα are quite rare names, as is Elisha. The names are more common in Thebes than elsewhere, but in this case there is also another element: while the declaration made by George and the signature of Apa Petros are preceded by crosses, the declaration of Mishael and Rebecca are not, and neither are the signatures of Jonathan and Esdras. The fact that George uses Elisha as an alternative name could here too point to a mixed family, which could also explain not only why as a Christian he borrowed from Jews but also why a substantial part of the debt was written off by the creditors. Interestingly, Peter's brother had married a woman named Martha, also one of the rare names we identified.

An analysis of rare Old Testament names along those lines could be more rewarding than what has been attempted to date. This is not the place to carry out that investigation systematically, but I believe clusters of rare names, combined with what we know of the geography of Jewish communities and integrating the data from texts in all languages, including Hebrew and Aramaic, would allow us to draw a clearer picture. In a majority Christian country, where Old Testament names were in vogue among Christians, names will never stand as proof in the strong sense. Bagnall's statement that it is "much more likely that biblical names in post-Hadrianic documents are a sign of Christianity"[68] remains true, but the degree of that likelihood is a function of the balance of numbers—and I hope to have shown that that balance was not as unfavorable to the Jews as was once thought.

Conclusion

The argument I have made in this chapter is twofold. First, departing from what I shall call the perfect correlation approach, where the number of references reflects the number of people, I suggest that different types of evidence can have considerably different weight in terms of what type of presence they imply and that non-indexing and invisibility are not necessarily only a matter of chance and survival of evidence but also a matter of strategy, especially for vulnerable communities.[69] Enough evidence has accumulated over time to indicate that Jews continued to live in Egypt in communal form, most probably adopting a low profile during the early decades after the tragic events. And second, I propose to push the analysis on onomastics in a way that should allow us to reach higher levels of likelihood than previously as to the potential communal affiliations of the individuals bearing Old Testament names. Beyond this, it is also possible to bring other contextual factors into play. The high levels of Old Testament names

among Christians in some areas (they are indeed by no means equally distributed throughout Egypt) could themselves point to proximity with Jews. Assimilation did not necessarily happen in a single direction in the framework of local communities, where permeability was no doubt the norm. Thus even though invisibility is not only in the eye of the beholder, but in all likelihood reflects strategies of disimulation and assimilation, it can be reduced to some extent if we look through the right lens, avoiding foregone conclusions.

Notes

1 M. Goodman, "Trajan and the Origins of Roman Hostility to the Jews," *Past & Present* 182 (2004): 27–28, referring to the crushing of the Bar Kochba revolt and the expulsion of the Jews from Judaea. As for the revolt of 115–17 CE, it marked "the total elimination of the Jewish communities of these regions" (10).

2 Appian, *Civil Wars* II 90: ὅπερ ἐπ᾽ ἐμοῦ κατὰ Ῥωμαίων αὐτοκράτορα Τραϊανόν, ἐξολλύντα τὸ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ Ἰουδαίων γένος; Arrian (*Parthica*, fr. 79) is more nuanced: "Trajan was determined above all, if it were possible, to destroy the nation entirely, but if not, at least to crush it and stop its presumptuous wickedness."

3 *CPJ* I, p. 93; see also, p. 92: "The results could easily be foreseen: they amounted to the almost total extermination of the Egyptian Jews." Still recently, this is strongly asserted in W. Clarysse, "The Jewish Presence in Graeco-Roman Egypt: The Evidence of the Papyri Since the *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*," in *Israel in Egypt: The Land of Egypt as Concept and Reality for Jews in Antiquity and the Early Medieval Period*, eds. A. Salvesen, S. Pearce, and M. Frenkel (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 319–20.

4 R. S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 276; his assessment of the situation between 117 and the fourth century is even more nuanced in R. S. Bagnall, "The Reappearance of a Jewish Community in Egypt," in *Roman Egypt: A History*, ed. R. S. Bagnall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 203–6. See also the comments in I. F. Fikhman, "Les Juifs d'Égypte d'après les papyrus publiés depuis la parution du 'Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum' III," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 15 (1996): 223–29.

5 *CPJ* I, p. 93. This has been the standard narrative among papyrologists—except, as indicated, Bagnall—ever since: see Clarysse, "Jewish presence," 320.

6 See among others E. J. Epp, "The Jews and the Jewish Community in Oxyrhynchus: Socio-Religious Context for the New Testament Papyri," in *New Testament Manuscripts. Their Texts and Their World*, eds. T. J. Kraus and T. Nicklas (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 3–40; G. G. Stroumsa, "Jewish Survival in Late Antique Alexandria," in *Jews in Byzantium: Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures*, eds. R. Bonfil, O. Irshai, G. G. Stroumsa, and Rina Talgam (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 257–70; T. Ilan, "The Jewish Community in Egypt Before and After 117 CE in Light of Old and New Papyri," in *Jewish and Christian Communal Identities in the Roman World*, ed. Y. Furstenberg (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 203–24, esp. 214–16 for the period from 117 CE to the fourth century; M. M. Piotrkowski, "'Literary Jews:' The Jews of Oxyrhynchus in Light of Non-documentary Texts on Papyrus," in *Sources and Interpretation in Ancient Judaism: Studies for Tal Ilan at Sixty*, eds. M. M. Piotrkowski, G. Herman, and S. Dönitz (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 143–73.

7 *P. Heid*. IV 333 (unknown origin, 5th century).

8 *P.Ross.Georg*. III 38 = *CPJ* III 511 (Antinoopolis, first half of 569); see l. 4 and 7 respectively.

9 Ilan, "The Jewish Community," esp. Part I, "How Jewish Is *CPJ*?" 203–10.

10 Ilan, "The Jewish Community," 210.

11 Ibid., 212–13. This is also the suggestion made by Mélèze Modrzejewski in his afterword to *The Jews of Egypt from Rameses II to Emperor Hadrian*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), but placing the process after 117. Stroumsa, "Jewish survival," 259, cites Arnaldo Momigliano telling him (orally) that the Jews stopped writing in Greek "because of the Christians." There is a substantial literature on this subject, which I shall leave aside here as I am focusing on other aspects.
12 *CPJ* I, p. 102; see now N. de Lange, "The Revival of the Hebrew Language in the Third Century CE," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 3 (1996): 342–58.
13 *CPJ* I, p. 101.
14 Ilan, "The Jewish Community," 204–6.
15 A. E. Cowley, "Hebrew and Aramaic Papyri," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 16 (1903): 1–8.
16 According to Ada Yardeni, cited by T. Ilan, "An Addendum to Bagnall and Cribiore, Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt: Two Aramaic Letters from Jewish Women," in *Israel in Egypt: The Land of Egypt as Concept and Reality for Jews in Antiquity and the Early Medieval Period*, eds. A. Salvesen, S. Pearce, and M. Frenkel (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 406, n. 31, in her re-edition of the text.
17 C. Sirat, P. Cauderlier, M. Dukan, and M. A. Friedman, *La Ketouba de Cologne* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1984). See also C. Sirat, *Les papyrus en caractères hébraïques trouvés en Égypte* (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1985) and the chapter by Susanna Wolfert—de Vries in this volume. The collection of Jewish (and Christian) literary papyri in J. van Haelst, *Catalogue des papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens* (Paris: Publ. de la Sorbonne, 1976) contains Greek texts only, and complements *CPJ* and the Hebrew material for our period.
18 These texts, as well as Greek papyri published since *CPJ* III, have now been published by Tal Ilan and Noah Hacham as *CPJ* IV (2020). See the overview of the Hebrew and Aramaic material in Ilan, "The Jewish Community," 221–24.
19 See now the two letters written by women in Ilan "An addendum."
20 *CPJ* I, p. 101.
21 See in general de Lange, "The Revival of Hebrew."
22 These numbers reflect the state of the Duke Database in 2019 when this chapter was submitted, and they have not been updated with evidence from new publications.
23 Stroumsa, "Jewish Survival," 258.
24 For an overview and discussion see H. Sözer, *Managing Invisibility: Dissimulation and Identity Maintenance Among Alevi Bulgarian Turks* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).
25 Megillah 18a (composed in the fifth or sixth century AD). The existence of Jewish scriptures in Egyptian is also mentioned in tractate Shabbat 115a, probably of similar date. The following chapter by Susanna Wolfert—de Vries discusses the embeddedness of Jews within the Egyptian legal and cultural landscape.
26 See A. Papaconstantinou, "La prière d'Anne dans la version sahidique du *Premier livre des Règnes*: quelques témoins méconnus," *Adamantius* 2 (2005): 227–31; A. Salvesen, "A Well-Watered Garden (Isaiah 58:11): Investigating the Influence of the Septuagint," in *"Translation Is Required": The Septuagint in Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. R. J. V. Hiebert (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 191–208. By Jewish, I mean not the Septuagint, which was very early on appropriated as the Greek Christian bible. The Greek speaking Jewish communities favoured other translations, most notably Aquila, several which is attested by several fifth- and sixth-century papyri; see for ex. LDAB 3469 = Van Haelst 203 (6th c.) and LDAB 3268 = Van Haelst 74 (5th/6th c.), both from the Cairo Geniza. The different versions could, of course, also have been disseminated through Origen's *Hexapla*.
27 *P.Oxy*. IX 1205 = *CPJ* III 473, dated 14 April 291. As Tcherikover notes, the document also shows that the community had a legal existence and could act as a party in a contract: *CPJ* I, p. 100.

28 T. Ilan, "Julia Crispina of the Babatha Archive Revisited: A Woman Between the Judean Desert and the Fayum in Egypt, Between the Diaspora Revolt and the Bar Kokhba War," in *Gender and Social Norms in Ancient Israel, Early Judaism and Christianity: Texts and Material Culture*, eds. M. Bauks, K. Galor, and J. Hartenstein (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019): 269–76.
29 *P.Oxy*. IX 1205, 8–9: πάτερ τῆς [συναγωγῆς].
30 Cowley, Notes, 210 and pl. XXVII; see *CPJ* I, 101.
31 W. Horbury and D. Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt: With an Index of the Jewish Inscriptions of Egypt and Cyrenaica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), no. 15–17, 19.
32 *P.Oxy*. LV 3805, 56 (after 566): δ(ιὰ) Λάζαρ Ἰουδαίου ὑ(πὲρ) ἐνοικίου τῆς συναγωγῆς δημ(οσίῳ) νο(μισμάτιον) α κερ(ατίου) δ′; "Lazar" was a popular abbreviation of Eleazar (see Piotrkowski, "Literary Jews," 155 n. 49).
33 *P.Oxy*. XVI 2037, 28 (=*CPJ* III 510; Oxyrhynchos, 4th quarter of the 6th c.).
34 *P.Oxy*. LXXXIII 5364 (Oxyrhynchos, 4th c.); *SPP* VIII 1299 (=*CPJ* III 506; Hermopolite, 5th or 6th century). See also the unpublished papyri cited in C. Balamoshev, "The Jews of Oxyrhynchos Address the Strategos of the Nome: An Early Fourth-Century Document," *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 47 (2017): 30, and the Yale papyrus published there (pp. 32–3), dated 17 August 309.
35 Balamoshev, "The Jews of Oxyrhynchos," especially the introduction p. 28–31 and the commentary to l. 5, p. 36–7.
36 *SB* XIV 11844 (Edfu/Apollonos Ano, 7th century); see the commentary to l. 5 in J. Gascou, "Ostrakon grec tardif de l'IFAO," *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 78 (1978): 230.
37 *P.Ant*. I 42 (=*CPJ* III 508; village of Lenaiou, Antinoopolite, 542).
38 *P.Herm*. 29 (=*CPJ* III 513; Hermopolis, 586). See also Wolfert—de Vries in this volume.
39 A. E. Cowley, "Notes on Hebrew Papyrus Fragments from Oxyrhynchus," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 2 (1915): 210.
40 The Royal Ontario Museum holds a fourth-century limestone breadstamp with a menorah (inv. no 910.152.1), and the Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst in Berlin holds a wooden one, probably from Hermopolis, dating to the fifth or sixth century: see C. Fluck, G. Helmecke, and E. O'Connell, eds., *Egypt: Faith After the Pharaohs* (London: The British Museum, 2015), 213, no. 249. Horbury and Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions,* no. 134 is a fourth-/fifth-century incense burner now in the Brooklyn Museum.
41 Fluck, Helmecke, and O'Connell, *Egypt*, 21, no. 10.
42 *CIJ* II 1439 = *SB* I 1157 = Horbury and Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions,* no. 21. The name Ἰουλιανοῦ is written around a menorah. It is tempting to imagine this being one of the containers measuring five "Jewish sextarii" (see above, p. 74 and n. 37).
43 See Horbury and Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions*, nos. 118 (al-Minya), 119 (Antonoopolis), 131 (unprovenanced).
44 Horbury and Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions*, no. 118.
45 Ibid., no. 119.
46 Ibid., no. 133 (unprovenanced).
47 See the general remarks by S. Lieberson, "What's in a Name? Some Sociolinguistic Possibilities," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 45 (1984): 77–87 and the systematic overview by E. Aldrin, "Names and Identity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*, ed. C. Hough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 382–94; a case study showing the complexity of naming choices is B. Vernier, *Le visage et le nom. Contribution à l'étude des systèmes de parenté* (Paris: PUF, 1999).
48 Lieberson, "What's in a Name?" 81.

49 General remarks in Aldrin, "Names and Identity," 388. Studies of the phenomenon in Central and South Asia are T. Rahman, "Personal Names of Pakistani Muslims: An Essay on Onomastics," *Pakistan Perspectives* 18 (2013): 33–57; T. Rahman, "Names as Traps: Onomastic Destigmatization Strategies in Pakistan," *Pakistan Perspectives* 19 (2014): 9–25; R. R. Mehrotra, "Name Change in Hindi: Some Sociocultural Dimensions," *Anthropological Linguistics* 21 (1979): 205–10; A. Dil, "A Comparative Study of the Personal Names and Nicknames of the Bengali-Speaking Hindus and Muslims," in *Studies on Bengal: Papers Presented at the Seventh Annual Bengal Studies Conference, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 28–30, 1971*, ed. W. M. Gunderson (East Lansing: Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University, 1975), 51–71. It is also documented among Jews after the Holocaust in Europe as well as immigrant Jews in the United States; see A. Beider, "Discontinuity of Jewish Naming Traditions," *Avotaynu* 28, no. 2 (2012): 43–53; K. Fermaglich, "'Too Long, Too Foreign . . . Too Jewish': Jews, Name Changing, and Family Mobility in New York City, 1917–1942," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 34 (2015): 34–57; Lieberson, "What's in a Name?" 81–82; E. S. Shapiro, "World War II and American Jewish Identity," *Modern Judaism* 10 (1990): 65–84.

50 See for example M. F. L. de Barros, "The Muslim Minority in the Portuguese Kingdom (1170–1496): Identity and Writing," *e-Journal of Portuguese History* 13 (2015): 18–35; Lieberson, "What's in a Name?" 81.

51 See for example Παρηγόριος as a Jewish name, a translation of Menachem: Horbury and Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions*, no. 143, the epitaph of an Alexandrian in Macedonia; G. H. R. Horsley, "Name Change as an Indication of Religious Conversion in Antiquity," *Numen* 34 (1987): 2–3.

52 See, in order of publication: R. S. Bagnall, "Religious Conversion and Onomastic Change in Early Byzantine Egypt," *BASP* 19 (1982): 105–24; E. Wipszycka, "La valeur de l'onomastique pour l'histoire de la christianisation de l'Égypte. À propos d'une étude de R.S. Bagnall," *ZPE* 62 (1986): 173–81; R. S. Bagnall, "Conversion and Onomastics: A Reply," *ZPE* 69 (1987): 243–50; Horsley, "Name Change"; J.-M. Carrié, "Le nombre des chrétiens en Égypte selon les données papyrologiques," in *Le problème de la christianisation du monde antique*, eds. Hervé Inglebert, Sylvain Destephen, and Bruno Dumézil (Paris: Picard, 2010), 147–57; W. Clarysse and M. Depauw, "How Christian Was Fourth-Century Egypt? Onomastic Perspectives on Conversion," *Vigiliae Christianae* 67 (2013): 407–35; D. Frankfurter, "Onomastic Statistics and the Christianization of Egypt: A Response to Depauw and Clarysse," *Vigiliae Christianae* 68 (2014): 284–89; W. Clarysse and M. Depauw, "Christian Onomastics: A Response to Frankfurter," *Vigiliae Christianae* 69 (2015): 327–29.

53 Wipszycka, "La valeur de l'onomastique," 175.

54 I concentrate here on Old Testament names, leaving aside cases where names have been observed to be at least partly preferred by Jews in late antiquity. See for example, J.-L. Fournet and J. Gascou, "À propos de PSI IX 1061 descr.: Le nom du saunier et une formation méconnue d'anthroponymes féminins," *ZPE* 135 (2001): 146–49, where Jewish milieus appear to have a soft spot for composite names starting with Κύρα-.

55 Bagnall, "Religious conversion," 110.

56 This is not the place to discuss that conception, which a large body of recent research on religious change would find flawed: see A. Papaconstantinou, "Introduction," in *Conversion in Late Antiquity: Christianity, Islam, and Beyond*, eds. A. Papaconstantinou, N. McLynn, and D. Schwartz (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), xv–xxxvii and David Frankfurter's chapter in this volume.

57 See Ilan, "Julia Crispina," who suggests that the Bar Kokhba war in 133 may well have prompted the 117 Egyptian refugees to Palestine to return home.

58 Clarysse and Depauw, "How Christian," 415 (Table 4) and 420 (Table 9).

59 Ibid.

60 See W. C. Till, *Datierung und Prosopographie der koptischen Urkunden aus Theben* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1962).
61 L. S. B. MacCoull, "A Cinderella Story from Byzantine Egypt: P.Cair.Masp. I 67089 and III 67294," *Byzantion* 62 (1992): 380–88. On this document, of which there are two copies, see the introduction and translation by Youval Rotman in J. Keenan, J. Manning, and U. Yiftach-Firanko, *Law and Legal Practice in Egypt from Alexander to the Arab Conquest: A Selection of Papyrological Sources in Translation, with Introductions and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 467–69, no. 9.3.3. It is dated to the first half of the sixth century.
62 *P.Flor*. III 313 (Hermoupolis, 12 August 449).
63 *P.Ross.Georg*. IV 18 (Aphrodito, early 8th c).
64 *SB* XIV 12052 (Hermopolite, 2 November 545 or 560).
65 *P.Athen.Xyla*. 9 (Hermopolite, 19 January 544).
66 *CPR* VIII 61 (Arsinoe, 27 March–27April 546).
67 *SB* I 2137 (Thebes, 6th/7th c.); see J. Urbanik, "Compromesso o processo? Alternativa risoluzione dei conflitti e tutela dei diritti nella prassi della tarda antichità." *SYMPOSION 2005 Vorträge zur griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte (Salerno, 14.—18. September 2005)*, ed. E. Cantarella (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), 397–98; note that this document is not *I.Louvre* 9 as stated by Urbanik, following the Duke Database and Trismegistos (still in 2019): *I.Louvre* 9 is a reedition of *SB* I 2237: the ostracon from Thebes is not in the Louvre, but in the Victoria Museum for Egyptian Antiquities in Uppsala.
68 Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 276.
69 See also the argument made by Petra Sijpesteijn for the first three centuries after the Arab conquest in her "Visible Identities: In Search of Egypt's Jews in Early Islamic Egypt," in *Israel in Egypt: The Land of Egypt as Concept and Reality for Jews in Antiquity and the Early Medieval Period*, eds. A. Salvesen, S. Pearce, and M. Frenkel (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 424–40.

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