

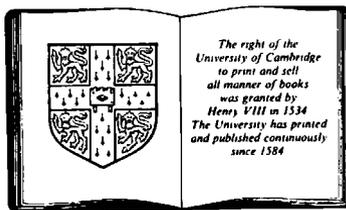
THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF JUDAISM.

EDITED BY

W. D. DAVIES, D.D., F.B.A.
LOUIS FINKELSTEIN, D.Litt., D.H.L.

VOLUME ONE

INTRODUCTION; THE PERSIAN PERIOD



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE

LONDON NEW YORK NEW ROCHELLE

MELBOURNE SYDNEY

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The **Pitt** Building, **Trumpington** Street, Cambridge CB2 **1RP**
32 East 57th Street, New York, NY **10022**, USA
296 Beaconsfield Parade, Middle Park, Melbourne **3206**, Australia

© Cambridge University Press **1984**

First published **1984**

Printed in Great Britain by the
University Press, Cambridge

Library of Congress catalogue card number: **77-85704**

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

The Cambridge history of Judaism

Vol 1: Introduction; The Persian period

I Judaism - History

I Davies, W. D. **II**. **Finkelstein**, Louis

296'.09'01 BM165

ISBN 0 521 21880 2

155.2

1984

miscellaneous legal texts (*CAP* 1-4, 7, 10, 11, 18, 29, 35, 36, 43-49); the *Words of Abikar* and fragments of the Behistun inscription; administrative texts and letters of the Persian authorities (*CAP* 16, 17, 24, 26; compare *CAP* 51-53); and memoranda written on the back of texts of the Behistun inscription (*CAP* 61-63). Thirteen ostraca mention the woman *Ahutab*¹ and the seven intact letters discovered at *Hermopolis* were destined for members of an *Aramean* family residing at *Syene* (*Bresciani* and *Kamil* 1-4) and at *Luxor* (*Bresciani* and *Kamil* 5-7). Another group of three letters was written from *Migdol* to their relatives at *Elephantine* (*Bresciani* 1-3). The earliest contract (515 B.C.E.) is a land-lease between the west-Semite *Padi* and an Egyptian (*Meissner* papyrus).

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COLONY AT ELEPHANTINE

The earliest Elephantine contract is a deed of exchange dating from 495 B.C.E. (*CAP* 1), while the latest document is a letter of the year 399 (*Kraeling* 13). A letter of 407 B.C.E. reported that the Jewish community at Elephantine, with a temple to its God, *YHW*, was well established before the Persian conquest in 525 (*CAP* 30: 13f; 31: 12f). There have been numerous suggestions regarding the date and origin of the Elephantine colony, some tracing its inhabitants to north Israelites or Samaritans,² others to the allegedly Jewish colony of *Yadi* in southern Anatolia,³ and one scholar to the Hebrews who remained in Egypt at the time of the Exodus.⁴ The most informative notice on the subject is the statement in *The Letter of Aristeas* about the migration of Jews to Egypt under the Ptolemies and under the Persians which adds 'and even before this others had been *sent out* [italics mine] as auxiliaries to fight in the army of *Psammetichus* against the king of the *Ethiopians*' (line 13). *Psammetichus* II did campaign against *Nubia* in 591 B.C.E. and his mercenary forces left their graffiti on the colossus of *Ramses II* at *Abu Simbel*. The names indicate *Carians*, *Ionians*, *Rhodians*, and *Phoenicians* but no *Jews*.⁵

¹ Cf. the references in *Porten, Archives*, p. 136, n. 82.

² C van Gelderen, 'Samaritaner und Juden in Elephantine-Syene', *OLZ*, 15 (1912), 557ff; F. Nau, 'Juifs et Samaritains à Eléphantine', *JA*, 10th series, 18 (1911), 660ff; Vincent, *Religion*, pp. 357ff. [See above p. 364 for E. *Bresciani's* views. Eds.]

³ C. H. Gordon, 'The Origin of the Jews in Elephantine', *JNES*, 14 (1955), 56ff.

⁴ E. C. B. Maclaurin, 'Date of the Foundation of the Jewish Colony at Elephantine', *JNES*, 27 (1968), 89ff.

⁵ S. Sauneron and J. Yoyotte, 'La campagne nubienne de Psammétique II et sa signification historique', *BIFAO*, 50 (1952), 200f, *idem*, 'Sur la politique palestinienne des rois saïtes', *VT*, 2 (1952), 131 ff; N. Slouschz, *Thesaurus of Phoenician Inscriptions* (Tel Aviv, 1942), nos. 53-4 (Hebrew). A. Bernard and O. Masson, 'Les inscriptions grecques d'Abou-Simbel', *REG*, 70 (1957), 1-46.

It is more likely that the ruler referred to in *The Letter of Aristeas* was the founder of the Saitic dynasty, Psammetichus I. To establish his position over the other local dynasts, to unite Egypt under his rule and overthrow the Assyrian yoke he relied on foreign mercenaries.¹ King Manasseh of Judah had earlier been forced to send a military contingent to aid Ashurbanipal in his conquest of Egypt.² Now, around the year 650 B.C.E. when Assyria was preoccupied with rebellion nearby, Manasseh sought independence from Assyria and committed his troops to Psammetichus to aid him in his campaign against the Ethiopians.³ These forces would have been subsequently stationed at Elephantine (compare Herodotus n.30) to replace the Egyptian soldiers there who had earlier fled to Nubia because of their dissatisfaction with the new state of affairs in Egypt.⁴ Allusions in the Book of Deuteronomy, discovered in the Jerusalem Temple under Josiah (2 Kings 22 to 23; 2 Chron. 34 to 35), support the assumption of a migration under Manasseh. The book forbade the king to return the 'people' (= soldiery [see 2 Kings 13: 7]) to Egypt in exchange for horses (Deut. 17: 16) and objected to worship of the heavenly bodies (Deut. 4: 19). The first as well as the second injunction may echo the activity of Manasseh, who was known to have introduced worship of the heavenly bodies into the Temple itself (2 Kings 21: 5ff, 23: 4; 2 Chron. 33: 1ff). This paganization did not go unopposed (2 Kings 21: 10ff), and it is possible that alienated priests fled to Elephantine and there established a new temple.

No Egyptian documents explicitly mention the Jews in Elephantine or elsewhere in Egypt but two texts may refer to them. Under Apries, the 'Governor of the Door of the Southern Countries', Nesuhor, dissuaded the mercenaries at Elephantine from desertion to Nubia. In addition to Greeks these included 'zmmw-Asiatics and Sttyw-Asiatics'.⁵ One term may refer to Jews and the other to Arameans. Similarly, a fragmentary demotic papyrus from Elephantine (529 B.C.E.) shortly before the Persian conquest, recorded two different Semitic groups - 60 *rmt n Hr* ('Palestinians') and 15 *rmt n 'Išwr* ('Syrians') - in a caravan to Nubia.⁶

¹ F. K. Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens vom 7. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1953), pp. 9ff.

² J. B. Pritchard, *ANET*, pp. 294ff

³ For the Nubian campaign of Psammetichus I, cf Sauneron and Yoyotte, 'Campagne'.

⁴ Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte*, p. 40.

⁵ J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt. Historical Documents from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest* (Chicago, 1906), vol. 4, p. 508, and discussion in Porten, *Archives*, p. 15, n. 55

⁶ W. Erichsen, 'Erwägung eines Zuges nach Nubien unter Amasis in einem demotischen Text', *Klio*, 34 (1941), 56-61

GARRISONS AT ELEPHANTINE-SYENE

None of the Elephantine Aramaic documents refers to Greeks or Phoenicians. Instead we find Babylonians (*CAP* 6: 19), Caspians (Kraeling 3: 2, 23f, 4: 11, 12: 4), Khorazmians (*CAP* 6: 2, 8: 23), Medes (Kraeling 5: 17), and of course Persians. The garrison at Elephantine must have been predominantly Jewish and was known as 'the Jewish force' (*hayla'*) (*CAP* 21, 22), while the one on the mainland must have been mixed, since it was simply known as the 'Syenian force' (*CAP* 24: 33). In the legal contracts, individual Jews were variously designated 'Aramean of (the fortress of) Syene' (*CAP* 5: 2, 13: 2 etc.), 'Aramean of [the fortress of] Elephantine' (*CAP* 25: 2, 35: 2 etc.) or 'Jew of (the fortress of) Elephantine' (*CAP* 6: 3, 9: 2 etc.). In petitions the Jews called themselves 'citizens (*ba'a'e*) of Elephantine' (*CAP* 30: 22) and their leaders were designated 'Syenians who [ho]ld [prop]erty in the fortress of Elephantine' (*CAP* 33: 6). Classical sources reported that Egypt had a warrior class devoted exclusively to military training and bequeathing its profession to its children (Herodotus, II.164ff; Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.8.9; Diodorus 1.73). This situation foreshadowed the Greek cleruchy of the Hellenistic period and may serve as a model for understanding the condition of the Jewish soldiers at Elephantine-Syene during the Persian period.

The organization of the Jews was a socio-military one. Individuals, whether men or women, not associated with the Temple, were members of a detachment (*degel*), apparently equivalent to the Persian chiliarchy, which was further subdivided into centuries. Jews and non-Jews served together in the same detachment (Kraeling 11: 1f), but all the century and detachment leaders were non-Jews. Names such as the Persian Varyazata (*CAP* 6: 3, 13: 2) and Haumadata (*CAP* 8: 2, 9: 2), the Babylonian Iddinnabu (Kraeling 5: 2, 14: 2, 7: 1f; *CAP* 20: 2ff) and Nabukudurri (*CAP* 7: 3, 29: 1f, 35: 2; Kraeling 11: 1f, 12: 2f), and the Aramean Nabuaqab (*CAP* 22: 20) were borne by these leaders. The garrison commanders were all Persians: Ravaka at the beginning of the fifth century (*CAP* 1: 3), and, toward the end, Vidranga (*CAP* 20: 4f, 25: 2ff; Kraeling 8: 2f) and, later, his son Naphaina (*CAP* 30: 7), both of whom were attached to Syene but appeared to control the Elephantine garrison as well.

The Elephantine documents contain virtually no information on the military tasks of its soldiers. These were imposed by the natural features of the region and must have been similar throughout the ages. The first cataract above (that is, south of) Assuan marked the limits of deep water navigation in Egypt. Special cataract boatmen were employed to

navigate the rapids and the area beyond (Herodotus II.29; CAP 5: 13, 6: 10f, 8: 7f, 26: 1, 7; Kraeling 12: 20). Elephantine was thus necessarily a point of trans-shipment, and the garrison there would probably be entrusted with the maintenance of the Nile boats (CAP 26, compare Aimé-Giron 5-24), supervision of commerce and the collection of tribute from the Nubians (Herodotus III.97). It was also a staging-point for expeditions into Nubia¹ and for caravans into Egypt (Papyri Loeb 1).² The Elephantine soldiers would have accompanied both (see CAP 38: 3f; Bresciani 1: 2). Demotic papyri and the inscription of the Aramaic word *by* ('house') indicate that quarrying activity at Elephantine and Syene continued to be carried on during the Saitic-Persian period.³ The prominent Jewish woman, Mibtahiah, was married in succession to two Egyptians, Pia son of Pahi and Eshor son of Seho, respectively designated 'builder' (CAP 4: 2) and 'royal builder' (CAP 15: 2). As soldiers, the Jews may have worked in the quarries, supervised the work, or served as military escort on distant quarrying expeditions. Another activity of theirs might have been involved with supervision of the Nilometer. One from Roman times is preserved on the south-east end of the island. The rise of the Nile was carefully charted to serve as a guide for water distribution and canal work and to forecast crop yield and government revenues (Strabo, XVII.1.148, 817).

In pursuit of their duties the Elephantine soldiers had contact with numerous officials at the local and provincial level. The province of which the Elephantine-Syene garrisons may have been the main sites was Tshetres, 'the Southern District' (CAP 24: 39, 43; 27: 9), corresponding to, if not identical with, the term 'Pathros, southern land', known from the Bible (Isa. 11 • 11, Jer. 44: 1, 15) as a place of Jewish settlement. The chief official at Elephantine bore the title *frataraka*, 'the foremost' (compare the title *fratama* underlying biblical *partëmim* [Esther 1: 3, 6: 9; Dan. 1: 3]) and, like the garrison commander under his jurisdiction there (CAP 25: 2ff; Kraeling 8: 2f) exercised both civil-judicial (CAP 20: 4) and military functions (CAP 30: 5ff; 31: 5ff). Here, too, the individuals holding the post bore Persian names, Ramandaina (CAP 20: 4) and Vidranga (CAP 27: 4, 30: 5, 31: 5). So

¹ Erichsen, *Klio*, 34 (1941)

² W. Spiegelberg, *Die demotischen Papyri Loeb* (Munich, 1931), pp. 1ff

³ W. Enchsen, 'Ein Bericht über Steinbrucharbeiten auf der Insel Elephantine in demotischer Schrift', in *Studi in memoria di I. Rosellini* (Pisa, 1955), 2, 75ff; *idem*, 'Zwei fruhdemotische Urkunden aus Elephantine', in *Coptic Studies in Honor of Walter Ewing Crum* (Boston, 1950), pp. 272ff; A. H. Sayce, 'An Inscription of S-ankh-ka-Ra, Karian and other inscriptions', *PSBA*, 28 (1906), 174ff, pls 2, 10, *idem*, 'An Aramaic Ostrakon from Elephantine', *PSBA*, 30 (1908), 41

did one of the leading judges, Damidata (*CAP* 6: 6). We may conjecture that the other provincial officials, the *typty*, 'police' and the *gauša-ka*, 'spies' (*CAP* 27: 9)¹ were likewise Persians. The only person with a Hebrew name holding an administrative position was 'Anani the Scribe (and) Chancellor' at the court of the satrap Arsames in Memphis (*CAP* 26: 23). In their difficulties with the Egyptian priests, who won the support of the *frataraka* and his son the garrison commander (*CAP* 30: 5ff; 31: 5ff), the Elephantine Jews looked to their co-religionist at court for backing (*CAP* 38: 4ff).

Unfortunately most of the documents referring to administrative matters are damaged (C.-1P 2—3, 16—17, 24, 37) or difficult to interpret (*CAP* 26), so that the precise role of other officials is not always clear. Since most of the documents are legal contracts there are numerous references to judges, once to 'royal judges', who, together with the garrison commander, distributed 'portions' to some Jewish women (*CAP* 1), once to 'provincial judges' who investigated the actions of the Egyptians against the Jewish force (*CAP* 27: 9f). A complainant was entitled to take his case, not only to a judge, but to a *sagan* or lord (Kraeling 12: 28). Did the *sagan* refer to the garrison commander or the *frataraka*? Did 'lord' refer to the *frataraka* or the satrap (compare *CAP* 17: 1, 5)? Might a complainant appeal directly to the top authority or did he have to take his case first to local judges (compare *CAP* 16)?

The need to go through well-defined channels may be seen from a twenty-three-line letter sent in the name of the satrap, Arsames, by his scribe and chancellor, Anani, and written by an Aramean, Nabuaqab (*CAP* 26). It reviews the procedures necessary to secure the repair of a boat and authorizes that repair. Two boatmen, the Egyptian Psamsineith and his colleague, reported to their Persian superior, the (chief-)boatman, Mithradates, that the boat needed repair (*CAP* 26: 2-3). Mithradates ordered the treasurers to take the Aramean (Phoenician?), Shemshillech, and his companions, the foremen (*framanakara*), together with the Egyptian chief carpenter Shamou son of Kenufi and inspect the boat (*CAP* 26: 3-6). The foremen and carpenter drew up for the treasurers a precise list of all the materials necessary for the repair (*CAP* 26: 6-21), and the latter authorized disbursement of the material. The report, inspection, and approval were all recounted to Arsames by Mithradates, and the former now responded with a letter to the Egyptian Wahpremahī (*CAP* 26: 1, 24) to implement the repair immediately. The recipient scribbled two lines in Aramaic and one in demotic at the end of the letter. The need to write to the satrap's office at Memphis in order to secure approval for repair of a boat at

¹ For the etymology of these Persian titles cf. Porten, *Archives*, pp. 44, 50f.

Elephantine may shed light on the complaint of a Jewish father, Osea, to his son, Shelomam, on caravan escort to Elephantine: 'Since the day you left (Lower) Egypt salary has not been given to us and when we complained to the governors here at Migdol about your salary, we were told thus, saying, "About this, [complain] to the scribes and it will be given to you"' (Bresciani 1-5).

STANDARD OF LIVING

The Elephantine-Syene colonists, both men and women, received a monthly ration {*ptp'*} in grain and legumes {*CAP* 2, 43: 8; Kraeling 11: 4}, and a monthly payment in silver {*prs* [*CAP* 2: 16, 11: 6; Bresciani and Kamil 1: 5, 8f]}. Of Egypt's three major grains, wheat was the most expensive and is rarely mentioned {*CAP* 49: 2}. The cheapest grain was **emmer** (*kntn*) {*CAP* 10: 10; Kraeling 11: 3ff; Aimé-Giron 87 [*k' = kntn 'rdb*, 'an ardab of emmer']} and the most common was barley {*CAP* 2: 3ff, 10: 10, 24: 38, 33: 14, 45: 8, 49: 2; Kraeling 17: 3 [*šp/š// = s'rn prs/s'n///*, '1 *peras* 3 *seahs* of barley']; compare Kraeling 17: 4, *CAP* 61: 2, 3). A loan contract was drawn up between the Jew, Anani, son of Haggai, son of Meshullam, and the Egyptian-named Aramean, Pakhnum, son of Besa, whereby the Jew borrowed 2 *peras* 3 *seahs* of emmer from the Aramean and agreed to return the same amount (*kšp// š'n// = kntn prsn/* /etc.)¹ out of the grain ration he would receive from the royal storehouse (Kraeling 11: 1-4). A *peras* was apparently a very large measure, a vat or storage cubicle, since the area beneath the stairway in a private house might be designated '*peras*-container' {*byt prs'* [Kraeling 9: 4, 7f]}. An official account of disbursement of barley to members of the Syenian garrison indicates a three-scale payment of one ardab (roughly a bushel), one and one-half ardabs and two and one-half ardabs {*CAP* 24: 27-30). There is no indication as to the amount of silver paid per month. The Elephantine shekel was the equivalent of one-half of an Athenian stater (tetradrachm) {*CAP* 29: 3, 35: 3f; Kraeling 12: 5, 14}. The monthly wage of the Greek mercenary at the time was one gold daric (= 12½ silver shekels) (Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.3.21, etc.) and it has been estimated that the minimum annual cost of living for an Athenian worker with wife and child was 136 shekels.²

If the Elephantine soldier earned what the Athenian worker did, how

¹ H. L. Allrik, 'The Lists of Zerubbabel (Nehemiah 7 and Ezra 2) and the Hebrew Numeral-Notation', *BASOR*, 136 (1954), 23f, which must modify what I wrote in *Archives*, pp. 71f.

² H. Michel, *The Economics of Ancient Greece* (2nd edn.; New York, 1957), pp. 132f

much could he buy? Prices in marriage contracts and conveyance documents provide some data:

Woman's dowry (less *mohar*) - $60\frac{1}{2}$ – $68\frac{1}{2}$ shekels {CAP 15: 14; Kraeling 7: 15f}

Expensive woollen garment - 28 shekels {CAP 15: 7f}

House- 14– $18\frac{1}{2}$ shekels (Kraeling 3: 6, 12: 5, 14)

Average woollen garment - 7 1/2 shekels {CAP 15: 9ff; Kraeling 2: 4f, 7: 6ff}

Linen garment- 1 shekel (Kraeling 7: 10ff)

Bronze utensil - $\frac{1}{2}$ – $1\frac{1}{2}$ shekels {CAP 15: 11ff; Kraeling 7: 13ff}

The *mohar* varied between five and ten shekels {CAP 15: 4f; Kraeling 7: 4f) and the cost of divorce was $7\frac{1}{2}$ shekels {CAP 15: 24; Kraeling 2: 8, 10, 7: 26). An average loan was four shekels {CAP 10: 3f, 11: 2f), though a well-to-do woman might, on occasion, supply her father with 50 shekels' worth of goods {CAP 13: 5f). The estimated price of a slave would vary between 25 and 50 shekels.¹

The fertile land at the first cataract was meagre but some gardening and shepherding were practised. The government staples were supplemented by beans, cucumbers, gourds, and other vegetables. The date and **dom-palms**, which grew on the island, also yielded edible fruit as well as material for weaving baskets {CAP 15: 16; Kraeling 7: 17). Other **wickerwork** baskets came from willow (*sik*) branches and papyrus reed (*gm'*) {CAP 15: 15t; Kraeling 7: 17f).² Sheep supplied wool, and cheese was made from goat's milk. Animal skins from Nubia provided leather garments and sandals (CAP 15: 16 supralinear, 37: 10; Kraeling 2: 5, 7: 20 ['a pair of Persian leather (sandals)']; Bresciani and Kamil 3: 7f). According to Herodotus, men in Egypt wore 'linen tunics with fringes hanging about the legs... and loose white woollen mantles over these' (II.81). The letters contain frequent requests for hides {CAP 37: 10; Bresciani and Kamil 3: 7f) and tunics (Bresciani and Kamil 2: 11; CAP 42: 8; Bresciani 1: x+1 seq.), and the marriage contracts indicate that women possessed both linen (Kraeling 7: 11ff) and large woollen garments (8 x 5 cubits and 6 x 4 cubits), usually dyed throughout or simply along the edges {CAP 15: 7ff; Kraeling 7: 6ff; compare CAP 42: 9, Bresciani and Kamil 3: 10). A product for the toilet, as well as the table, was oil and at least four different kinds, including (imported) olive oil, castor oil and probably sesame oil are known (Kraeling 7: 20f). The letters contain frequent requests for castor oil

¹ W. H. Dubberstein, 'Comparative Prices in Later Babylonia (625-400 B.C.),' *AJSL*, 56(1959), 34ff, M. Malinine, 'Un jugement rendu a Thebes sous la XXV^e dynastie', *RE*, 6 (1951), 171, n. 1.

² P. Grelot, 'Etudes sur les textes arameens d'Éléphantine', *KB*, 78 (1971), 517ff.

(Bresciani and Kamil 2: 13, 3: 12, 4: 7; CAP 37: 10), and there may have been a castor grove at Syene (Aimé-Giron 99).

The dwellings were of sun-dried mud brick {CAP 10: 9; Kraeling 11: 11}. Rectangular in shape, they often contained more than one room, and an outer staircase leading to the roof, indicating either a second storey or an upper living area. The house might also contain a courtyard or entryway and a beamed roof (Kraeling 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12). Local wood was scarce, however, and the roofs in most of the excavated houses were brick barrel vaults.¹ Jews dwelt next to their temple {CAP 13: 13f, 25: 6; Kraeling 3: 9f, 4: 9f, 12: 18f}, but also next to the district of the Egyptian god, Khnum (Kraeling 3: 8, 4: 10), and their neighbours included Caspians (Kraeling 3: 2, 7f, 4: 11), Khorazmians {CAP 6: 7f, 8: 5f}, Egyptians {CAP 5: 12f, 6: 10f, 8: 7f; Kraeling 6: 7f, 9: 10, 10: 6, 12: 20f} and other foreigners {CAP 13: 15}. In fact, the construction of an Egyptian shrine in the midst of the Jewish community (Kraeling 9: 8f, 10: 3f) seems to have been a factor leading to the destruction of the Jewish temple.

RELIGION

The possession of a temple to the God YHW was one of the most fascinating features of the Elephantine Jewish community. The shrine was usually designated 'egōrā < Akkadian *ekurru*, 'temple' < Sumerian *é.kur*, 'mountain house' and was probably enclosed within a courtyard since it possessed five carved stone gateways with bronze hinges {CAP 30: 9ff; 31: 8ff; compare the six gateways in Ezekiel's Temple [Ezek. 40]}. Its cedarwood roof {CAP 30: 11; 31: 10} indicates a rectangular structure and this is confirmed by a calculation of the dimensions of the adjacent buildings. It is likely that the outer dimensions of the courtyard were 60 by 20 cubits, reminiscent of those given for Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 6: 2).² The woodwork (? 'sm) in the Elephantine temple {CAP 30: 11} may refer to logs alternating with brick or stone layers in the walls (compare 1 Kings 6: 36; Ezra 5: 8, 6: 4) or to interior wainscoting (compare 1 Kings 6: 15ff).

In concept and cult the Elephantine temple bore striking resemblance to the temple of ancient Israel. It was the 'House of YHW (Bresciani 1: 1) and He was 'YHW The God who dwells in the fortress of Elephantine' (Kraeling 12: 2, compare Ps. 135: 21; Isa. 8: 18; Joel 4: 17, 21; Ps. 74: 2), the 'God of Heaven' {CAP 30: 2, 27f; 31: 2, 26f,

¹ W. Honroth, O. Rubensohn and F. Zucker, 'Bericht über die Ausgrabungen auf Elephantine in den Jahren 1906-1908', ZÄ46 (1909-10), 18.

² B. Porten, 'The Structure and Orientation of the Jewish Temple at Elephantine - A Revised Plan of the Jewish District', JAOS, 81 (1961), 58ff

32: 3f, 38: 5; compare Ezra 1: 2, 5: 12, Neh. 1: 4f etc.) and 'Lord of hosts' (YHWH *šb'š*; compare 1 Sam. 4: 4; 2 Sam. 6: 2).¹ These four terms express the immanence-transcendence theology of ancient Israel: God is both far and near.² His house is an 'Altar House' (CAP 32: 3) where meal-offering, incense and holocaust were offered up daily - in Israel (Exod. 29: 38ff; Num. 28: 3ff) as, probably, at Elephantine (CAP, 30: 21f; 31: 21). This daily cult was designed to guarantee the presence of God in the midst of His people (Exod. 29: 45). The welfare sacrifice (*dbh* [CAP 30: 28; 31: 27]) established a merit before God intended to induce His blessing upon the offerer (compare Gen. 8: 20 to 9: 1; Lev. 9: 22f; Num. 6: 22ff). The communal leader Jedaniah gave expression to this idea in his letter to Bagohi governor of Judah; if he responded favourably he 'would have merit (*sdqh*) before YHWH the God of Heaven more than a person who offers Him holocaust and welfare sacrifices worth a thousand talents of silver and (about) gold' (CAP 30: 27f; 31: 26f). In their terminology the Elephantine Jews made the same distinction between Jewish priest (*khn* [CAP 30: 1, 18, 38: 1, 12]) and pagan priest (*kmr* [CAP 13: 5, 27: 3, 8, 30: 5]) as did their Israelite forebears (compare 2 Kings 23: 5ff; Zeph. 1: 4).³

Though the cult itself may not have been heterodox the very existence of the temple is surprising. From earliest times (Josh. 22; 1 Sam. 26: 19, 27: 1f) the idea persisted (2 Kings 5: 15ff; Jer. 16: 13; Ezek. 4: 13) that foreign soil was ritually unclean precluding erection thereon of a temple. Still, even after the Deuteronomic reformation concentrated worship in Jerusalem (2 Kings 22 to 23; 2 Chron. 34 to 35), three temples were erected outside the city of David: the Samaritan temple on mount Gerizim, the Qasr el-Abd of Hyrcanus at Araq el-Emir in Transjordan, and the temple of Onias IV at Leontopolis in Egypt. The military character of each of these sites and the feature of priestly disaffection present at their establishment support a dating in the reign of King Manasseh for the founding of the Elephantine temple. Shechem was rebuilt and strongly fortified at the same time that the Samaritan temple was erected under the high-priesthood of Manasseh, who broke with his brother Jaddua, high priest in Jerusalem (Josephus, *Antiquities* XI.7.2, 302ff).⁴ Rebuffed by the High Priest Simon II, Hyrcanus son of

¹ A Dupont-Sommer, 'Yaho' et 'Yaho-Seba'ot' sur des ostraca arameens inedits d'Eléphantine', *CRAIBL* (1947), 175-91.

² Porten, *Archives*, pp. 107ff.

³ Cf J. A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Kings*, ICC (New York, 1951).

⁴ Cross, *BA*, 26 (1963), 120f; *idem*, *HTR*, 59 (1966), 203ff, G. E. Wright, *Shechem: The Biography of a Biblical City* (New York, 1965), pp. 172ff.

Joseph, of high-priestly lineage, retired to the ancestral fortress in Transjordan where he erected the Qasr el-ʿAbd, now considered to have been a temple.¹ Onias IV, passed over for the high-priesthood in favour of Alcimus, descended into Egypt and erected a temple in the fortress of Leontopolis.² Like the Elephantine temple, this one resembled that in Jerusalem (*War* I.1.1, 33; *Antiquities* XII.9.388; XIII.3.1, 63, 67; IO.4, 285; XX.10.3, 236; but compare *War* VII.10.3, 427f).

Analogy from the Leontopolis temple may further illuminate the foundation of the Elephantine shrine. The former was said to have been inspired by the prophecy of Isaiah: 'In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord at its border' (*Isa.* 19: 19), and erected under a permit of Ptolemy VI, who hoped thereby to foster Jewish loyalty toward himself (*Antiquities* XIII.3.1., 62ff; compare Babylonian Talmud *Menahoth* 109b). The Jewish priests who, in the present writer's view, fled from Manasseh's paganization, might likewise have been moved by Isaiah's prophecy, which for them would have been of most recent origin. Similarly the permit granted by Psammetichus I might have had political motivation - to guarantee the loyalty of his Jews to him and not to Manasseh, who failed in his attempted revolt against Assyria (2 Chron. 33: 10ff) and consequently might have been forced into an anti-Egyptian posture.³

Evidence for the Sabbath at Elephantine derives from four ostraca and five occurrences of the name Shabbetai. Rather than clarifying the question of Sabbath observance, these data merely serve to obscure it. The identity of the five names, whether Jewish or not, is unclear. One lacks a praenomen (*CAP* 58: 3), while one is a son of Kibda (*CAP* 2: 21), probably a Hebrew name. The other three all appear in non-Jewish contexts: father of the Babylonian Sinkishir (Kraeling 8: 10); son of Shug (Bresciani and Kamil 4: 10), and of 50 non-Jews recorded in the Hermopolis letters; an individual buried in a sarcophagus at Syene along with two others bearing non-Hebrew names.⁴ Though it is possible that these individuals owe their names to parents who were attracted by the Sabbath and chose to 'join themselves to the Lord' (compare *Isa.* 56: 6ff), it is more likely that they were not full proselytes

¹ P. W. Lapp, 'Soundings at 'Araq el-Emir (Jordan)', *BASOR*, 165 (1962), 24ff; *idem*, 'The second and third campaigns at 'Araq el-Emir', *BASOR*, 171 (1963), 39ff. (1963), 39ff.

² Josephus, *War* I.1.1, 33; 9.4, 190ff; *Ant.* XIV.8.1, 127ff, *War* VII.10.2-5, 420ff, *Ant.* XII.9.7, 287f, XIII.3.1-3, 62ff; IO.4, 284ff; XX.10.3, 236 *Contra Apionem* II.5, 49ff.

³ E. L. Ehrlich, 'Der Aufenthalt des Königs Manasse in Babylon', *TbZ*, 21 (1965), 285 f.

⁴ W. Kornfeld, 'Aramaische Sarkophage in Assuan', *WZKM*, 61 (1967), 9ff

and resembled the many Sabbathions in Egypt during the Roman period.¹ The reference to the Sabbath (*sbh*) in one ostrakon is obscure (Clermont-Ganneau 44),² while two suggest observance of the day itself since they indicate something being done before the Sabbath (Clermont-Ganneau 186, 204).³ The fourth ostrakon is addressed to Islah and reads, 'Now, behold I shall send vegetables tomorrow. Meet the boat tomorrow on the Sabbath (*bsbh*). Otherwise, if it be lost, by the life of YHW, I shall surely take yo[ur] life. Do not rely upon Meshullemeth or upon Shemaiah' (Clermont-Ganneau 152).⁴ Were the Elephantine Jews as lax in their Sabbath observance as their brethren in Judah, rebuked by Nehemiah for treading grapes, transporting produce, and trading on the Sabbath (Neh. 13: 15ff)? Or did the threat to take Islah's life indicate some extraordinary circumstance and indirectly attest regular Sabbath observance?

We are somewhat better informed about observance of the Passover than we are of the Sabbath, but here, too, the documents raise more questions than they answer. One ostrakon makes passing reference to the Passover (*psb*); a second possibly alludes to Passover eve (*rwbb*), suggesting, if so, the non-eating of leaven on that day (compare Pesahim 1: 4); a third asks, 'Inform me when you will keep/perform the Passover'⁵ Did this question mean that the date of the festival was unfixed? That the celebrant was ritually impure? That a second Adar might be intercalated? Did it refer to the paschal sacrifice or to the celebration of the festival? The question is found in a private note and asked in such an off-hand manner that it is hard to decide what information it was seeking.

Equally difficult to grasp is the import of a letter written to the Jewish leader Jedaniah, son of Gemariah, and his colleagues by Hananiah in 419 (*CAP* 21). The letter is fragmentary and the preserved text mentions neither the Passover nor the Feast of Unleavened Bread

¹ Cf V A Tcherikover and A Fuks, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (Cambridge, 1964), vol. 3, pp 43ff

² A. Dupont-Sommer, 'Un ostrakon arameen inedit d'Eléphantine (Collection Clermont-Ganneau N° 44)', in *Hebrew and Semitic Studies Presented to G R Driver*, ed. D W Thomas and W D McHardy (Oxford, 1963), pp 53ff

³ Dupont-Sommer, *CRAIBL* (1947), 178ff, *idem*, 'Un ostrakon arameen inedit d'Elephantine', *RSO*, 32 (1957), 403ff; *idem*, 'Sabbat et parasceve a Elephantine', *MPAIBL*, 15 (1960), 68ff; 74.

⁴ A. Dupont-Sommer, 'L'ostrakon arameen du Sabbat', *Semitica*, 2 (1949), 29-39, *idem*, 'Le sabbat dans les ostraca arameens inédits d'Eléphantine', *CRAIBL* (1945), 260-2, *idem*, *MPAIBL*, 15 (1960), 71ff, F Rosenthal, ed., *An Aramaic Handbook*, Parta *Linguarum Orientalium*, x (Wiesbaden, 1967), 1/1, 12f Translation based in part on conversation with H. L. Ginsberg

⁵ Grelot, *Documents*, pp. 376ff; E. L. Sukenik and E. Y. Kutscher, 'A Passover Ostrakon from Elephantine', *Qedem*, 1 (1942), 5 3ff (in Hebrew)

explicitly. Its biblical terminology, however, permits a relatively certain restoration of the greater part of the letter. If correctly restored, it would have called upon the Elephantine Jews to keep both feasts; to observe ritual purity; to abstain from work on the fifteenth and twenty-first days of Nisan; to abstain from eating leaven and drinking beer; to eat unleavened bread during the seven days of the festival; and to seal all leaven in special chambers. The beginning of Hananiah's letter to his 'brothers' reported a brief message of Darius II to the Egyptian satrap Arsames. Although the message may not be confidently restored, the brevity of the letter, as well as the paleographic dating of the third Passover ostrakon cited above, indicates that the festival was practised prior to Hananiah's letter. Whatever its purpose, Hananiah's mission aroused the animosity of the Elephantine Khnum priests against the Jews (*CAP* 38: 7). Any emphasis of a festival commemorating Egyptian defeat at the hands of the Jews' ancestors was likely to antagonize (see *Contra Apionem* 1.14, 73ff; 26-31, 227ff), and the Khnum priests may have prevented the Jews from celebrating their festival until Hananiah received renewed royal permission.¹

Private contracts shed further light on this conflict between the Jews and the Khnum priests. Some time after 437 (Kraeling 3) and perhaps already by 420 (Kraeling 6) an Egyptian 'divine chapel' (*qnbnty = knh ntr*) displaced the Caspian *Satubar* on the north-west side of the house of the temple official, Ananiah, son of Azariah (Kraeling 9: 9, 10: 5). The south-eastern border, known earlier as 'the district of the god Khnum' (Kraeling 3: 8, 4: 10), became inhabited by 420 by the Khnum officiant, Hor son of Peteisi (Kraeling 6: 8, 9: 10, 10: 6), and subsequently, by the Egyptian boatmen *Pehi* and *Pemet* sons of Tawi (Kraeling 12: 20). In 410 when Arsames had departed for a visit to the king, the Khnum priests bribed the Persian governor at Elephantine, Vidranga, to allow them to destroy the temple of YHW and part of the royal storehouse and erect a wall (*CAP* 27: 2ff, 30: 4ff; 31: 4ff). This was probably the Egyptian-built wall referred to in Ananiah's contracts of 404 and 402. Where formerly the royal storehouse bordered on his property to the northeast (Kraeling 3: 9, 6: 6f) now 'the wall of the shelter which the Egyptians built, that is, the way of the god' (*tmw'nty = t' my . t ntr*)² cut between the two properties (Kraeling 9: 8f, 10: 3f) to provide an approach road to the chapel. It would seem that the expansion of the interests of the god Khnum brought his priests into conflict with the Jewish temple. The conflict had long been

1 Porten, *Archives*, pp. 128ff, 279ff; Grelot, *Documents*, pp. 378ff; B. Porten, 'Aramaic Papyri and Parchments: A New Look', *BA*, 42 (1979), 88f.

2 Cf. B. Couroyer, 'Le temple de Yaho et l'orientation dans les papyrus arameens d'Elephantine', *RB*, 68 (1961), 524-40

simmering; both sides were bribing the Persian officials; and the Jews had taken their case to the investigators at Memphis (*CAP* 37)-ultimately to no avail.

Upon the destruction of the temple, the Jews went **into** mourning and reported the events to the Jewish authorities **in** Jerusalem, namely the governor **Bagohi**, the High Priest Johanan, Ostanes brother of Anani, and the nobles of Judah (*CAP* 30: 18ff; 31: 17ff). Their prayers were partially answered when **Vidranga** and others responsible were punished, some by death (*CAP* 30: 16f; 31: 15f), but permission to rebuild was not forthcoming. A letter was sent to **Delaiah** and **Shelemiah**, sons of Sanballat, governor of Samaria (*CAP* 30: 29; 31: 28), and a second letter dispatched to Bagohi on 25 November 407 (*CAP* 30: 30; 31: 29) urging intercession for the full restoration of their temple and **its** sacrificial cult. Bagohi and Delaiah withheld the requested letter, but they did instruct the Elephantine messenger to report to Arsames that the temple be rebuilt and meal-offering and incense be offered as formerly (*CAP* 32). The right to offer animal sacrifices was omitted, apparently as the exclusive prerogative of the Jerusalem sanctuary. The Elephantine Jews accepted the limitation and on the basis of the messenger's memorandum appealed once more to the Persian authorities, promising money and grain (*CAP* 33). Ananiah's sale contract of 12 December 402 indicated that southwest of his property lay the 'Temple of YHW (Kraeling 12: 18f)- the **site** still sacred to the Jewish God and perhaps already rebuilt.

Shortly thereafter, on 1 June 400, at the time of the Feast of Weeks, **Jedaniah** recorded two-shekel contributions from some **122** persons, including more than thirty women (*CAP* 22).¹ The overwhelming majority of Hebrew names indicates onomastic conservatism and little intermarriage. The list, however, does pose two problems. One is mathematical and **is** known to us from contemporary biblical lists (of temple vessels [Ezra 1: 9-11] and of repatriates [Ezra 2; Neh. 7]), namely the non-congruence between the recorded total and the running total. In our text the recorded total of **31** *karsh* 8 [error for 6] shekels = **316** shekels does not accord with the running total of 244 shekels = 2 shekels x **122** contributors. The second problem involves the apparent contradiction between the opening and closing of the **list**:

'These are the names of the Jewish garrison who gave silver to YHW the God'
(line 1)

'The silver which was that day **in** the hand of Jedaniah son of **Gemariah**... silver, **31** *karsh* 8 shekels;

¹ Porten, *Archives*, pp 128ff, 279ff; Grelot, *Documents*, pp. 378ff; Porten, 'Aramaic Papyri and Parchment. A New Look', *BA*, 42 (1979), 88ff.

12 k. 6 sh. of this are for YHW;

7 *karsh* are for Eshembethel;

silver, 12 *karsh* are for Anathbethel.' (lines 118-123)

The 72-*shekel* difference between the two tallies may be explained on the assumption that two columns are absent from our papyrus; each column would have contained eighteen names ($36 \times 2 = 72$). But what are we to make of the diversion of funds collected for YHW to Eshembethel and Anathbethel? Since the Elephantine documents also record the existence of a Herembethel (*CAP* 7: 7) and an AnathYHW (*CAP* 44: 3), it has been customary to consider all four divinities as part of the YHW cult at Elephantine.¹ While the evidence for considering AnathYHW as a syncretistic combination is strong, that for Bethel and affiliates suggests that these were part of the cult of the Arameans at Syene.

The Hermopolis letters addressed to Syene indicate the presence there of temples to the queen of heaven (Bresciani and Kamil 4: 1), Bethel (Bresciani and Kamil 4: 1), and Nabu (Bresciani and Kamil 1: 1). Bethel appears in an Aramaic religious text in demotic,² while one Sheil, priest of Nabu, was buried near Memphis.³ Diversified evidence shows Bethel and Nabu at home in Syro-Phoenicia for a millennium and at one location even linked together. Bethel was mentioned in a treaty between Esarhaddon and Baal of Tyre (*circa* 675),⁴ included in the pantheon of Philo of Byblos (11.16), and worshipped in the third century C.E. along the Orontes and at Dura-Europas;⁵ Nabu was popular among the Arameans at Haran in the seventh century B.C.E.⁶ and during the Christian era was worshipped at Edessa and elsewhere in the *Jebel Seman*,⁷ as well as at Dura-Europas.⁸ Anathbethel may also appear in the Esarhaddon-Baal treaty⁹ while the deity Symbetylos on a Kefr Nabu

¹ W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and Religion of Israel* (4th edn. Baltimore, 1956), pp. 168ff, A. Vincent, *La religion des judéo-araméens d'Éléphantine* (Paris, 1937), pp. 162ff; *CAP* VIII seq.; Kraeling, *Papyri*, pp. 87ff.

² R. A. Bowman, 'An Aramaic Religious Text in Demotic Script', *JNES*, 3 (1944), 226.

³ Aimé-Giron, pp. 99f, *idem*, 'Adversaria Semitica', *BIFAO*, 38 (1939), 35f.

⁴ R. Borger, 'Anath-Bethel', *VT*, 7 (1957), 102ff.

⁵ P. C. Bauer, M. I. Rostovtzeff and A. R. Bellinger, *The Excavations at Dura-Europas* (New Haven, 1933), pp. 68ff.

* C. H. W. Johns, *Assyrian Doomsday Book* (Leipzig, 1901), p. 16.

⁷ Cf. R. Duval, 'Histoire politique, religieuse et littéraire d'Edesse jusqu'à la première croisade', *JA*, 8th Series, 18 (1891), 228f; Aime-Giron, *loc. cit*

⁸ C. B. Welles, R. O. Fink and J. F. Gilliam, *The Excavations at Dura Europos; Final Report V, Part 1; The Parchment and Papyri* (New Haven, 1959), pp. 61ff.

⁹ See above n. 4.

inscription¹ is probably identical with Eshembethel. Kefr Nabu is located in the Jebel Seman, formerly called Jebel Nabu,² ancient Bit Agusi with its capital at Arpad. The beginning of Aramean settlement in Egypt may go back to the destruction of Arpad in 740 by Tiglath-pileser III.³ In any event, Arameans settling there brought with them their deities as did the Jews theirs. In the sixth to fifth centuries the worship of Bethel, Herem, Eshem, and Nabu in Egypt and Babylonia is widely attested by their appearance in personal names. The first three appear in forty-six names, of which twenty-seven are or have patronymics. Of these latter only three are joined with Hebrew names.⁴ In the Egyptian Aramaic papyri more Aramean names are compounded with Nabu than with any other non-YHWistic theophoric element; at Nippur he is the most represented deity in West-Semitic names next to El and YHW (written *ya-a-ma*).⁵ The biblical figure Bethel, scornfully compared by Jeremiah to the pagan deity Chemosh (Jer. 48: 13), was a local angel who had protected Jacob (Gen. 31: 11ff, 48: 16) and continued to be venerated thereafter. The identity of name with the Aramean Bethel is a case of nominal congruence but functional distinction. The communal funds collected for YHW and distributed to Him as well as to Eshembethel and Anathbethel may have been a goodwill gesture, or may have derived from Arameans whose names appeared on the lost columns.⁶

While the evidence for a syncretistic communal cult of the Jewish deity at Elephantine dissipates upon close inspection, that for individual Jewish contact with paganism remains. The latter evidence is of two kinds: greetings in letters and judicial oaths. The plural form 'lhy' in

¹ W. K. Prentice, *Syria: Greek and Latin Inscriptions, Northern Syria* (Leiden, 1907), 111/B, pp. 180ff

² H. C. Butler, *Syria: Geography and Itinerary* (Leiden, 1930), I, map facing p. 60, 68ff.; Aime-Giron, pp. 99f.

³ E. G. H. Kraeling, *Aram and Israel* (New York, 1918), p. 109; A. Dupont-Sommer, *Les Araméens* (Paris, 1949), p. 61.

⁴ Cf. Porten, *Archives*, pp. 328ff.

⁵ H. V. Hilprecht, *Business Documents of Murashû sons of Nippur*, Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania, series A: *Cuneiform Texts*, 9, (Philadelphia, 1898), nos. 23-8, 65: 25(?), 67: 1(?), 70: 4, 82: 6, 85: 22, 86: 18, *ibid.*, 10: 31: 2 L. E., 64: 6 U. E., 67: 15, 109: 3, 110: 4, 120: 3, 126: 11 U. E. (?), A. T. Clay, *Business Documents of Murashû sons of Nippur*, University of Pennsylvania Museum, Babylonian Section II/1 (Philadelphia, 1912), 31: 9, 42: 2, 53: 14, 79: 1, 108: 12, 203: 6, 221: 1, 10. See also M. D. Coogan, 'West Semitic Personal Names in the Murašû Documents' (unpublished Ph.D. Diss., Harvard University, 1971; corrected, 1973) 73ff.

⁶ U. Cassuto, 'The Gods of the Jews at Elephantine', *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, II (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 240ff.

greetings to Jews by Jews {CAP 21: 2, 39: 1, 56: 1, compare 37: 1f} may be the equivalent of Hebrew *Elobim*, with singular meaning, or a frozen formula used unconsciously; alternatively the letters may have been drawn up by non-Jewish scribes. On two ostraca non-Jews wrote to Jews and blessed them by pagan deities: Yarho greeted Haggai (Clermont-Ganneau 277) by invoking Bel, Nabu, Shamash, and Nergal;¹ the tailor Giddel (compare Ezra 2: 47, 56; Neh. 7: 49, 58 for the non-Jewish use of the name) blessed Micaiah (Clermont-Ganneau 70) by YHW and *Hn* [= Han?, Khnum?].² There are three judicial situations in which a Jew takes, or promises to take, an oath by a pagan deity. In one, and perhaps two, of the cases the reason may be the non-Jewish identity of the person to whom the oath is being rendered. Mibtahiah, divorced from the Egyptian Pia, swears to him by the Egyptian goddess Sati {CAP 14}; Malchijah son of Jashobiah promises to a person whose name is missing that he will 'call' to the god Herembethel (CAP 7). In the third case Menahem, son of Shallum, son of Ho[shaiah/daviah], swore (or: will swear) to Meshullam, son of Nathan, 'by H[erem?] the [god] in/by the place of prostration and by AnathYHW (CAP 44). This latter deity appears to be a clear example of Jewish syncretism. Anath's title in Egyptian was *nbt pt*, 'Lady of Heaven' appearing on a stela from Bethshan and a jar of Prince Psammetichus.³ The Semitic equivalent was 'Queen of Heaven' and, as noted, under this epithet she had a temple at Syene (Bresciani and Kamil 4: 1). In pre-exilic Judah individual Jews, particularly women, worshipped the Queen of Heaven and continued to do so after their migration to Egypt (Jer. 7: 16ff, 44: 15ff). To them she provided prosperity and security and so AnathYHW would be that aspect of YHW which assured man's well-being.

LEGAL DOCUMENTS AND SCRIBAL CRAFT

The largest single group of texts, some forty in all, consists of legal contracts. Broadly speaking, we may divide these into deeds of conveyance, obligation, marriage and adoption. Conveyance documents

1. A. Dupont-Sommer, 'Bel et Nabu Šamaš et Nergal sur un ostracon arameen inedit d'Elephantine', *RHR*, 128 (1944), 28ff.
2. A. Dupont-Sommer, 'Le syncretisme religieux des Juifs d'Elephantine d'apres un ostracon arameen inedit,' *RHR*, 130 (1945), 17ff, *idem*, *CRAIBL*, (1947), 177f.
3. A. Rowe, *The Topography and History of Beth-shan* (Philadelphia, 1930), pp. 32f, pl. 50, no 2: *idem*, *The Four Canaanite Temples of Beth-shan* (Philadelphia, 1940), pp 33 f, pl. 65 A, no. 1; B. Grdseloff, *Les debuts du culte de Rechef en Egypte* (Cairo, 1942), pp. 28ff.

are the most frequent; **six** categories may be differentiated, of which the first three were common: (1) house-sale (Kraeling 3, 12); (2) house-gift (*CAP* 8, 9, 13, 46, 47; Kraeling 4, 6, 9, 10); (3) withdrawal, usually subsequent to litigation (*CAP* 6, 14, 20, 25, 43; Kraeling 1, 5 [emancipation]); (4) exchange of shares (*CAP* 1); (5) wall-building (*CAP* 5); (6) slave assignment (*CAP* 28). Six marriage contracts, or parts thereof (*CAP* 15, 18, 36; Kraeling 2, 7, 14), and perhaps a seventh (*CAP* 48), have been preserved. Since the endorsements from several deeds of obligation are missing (*CAP* 2, 3, 7, 11, 29, 35, 45, 49) or non-existent (*CAP* 44), classification is according to content rather than official terminology. Four kinds of text appear: loan of money (*CAP* 10, 11) or of grain (Kraeling 11); promise to pay a balance, whether on a house (*CAP* 29) or of dowry to a *divorcee* (*CAP* 35); promise to deliver entrusted grain (*CAP* 2, 3); and obligations of payment (*CAP* 45) or oath (*CAP* 7, 44) attendant upon judicial proceedings. One text is too fragmentary for classification (*CAP* 49). There is only one adoption text (Kraeling 8) and its endorsement is missing; perhaps it was called 'deed of sonship'.

The variegated kinds of text as well as the fixed legal formulae therein testify to diverse social and economic activity on the one hand and to a developed scribal craft on the other. In about thirty texts the name of the scribe is preserved or may be inferred. Thirteen such names have survived and the interesting fact is that seven were non-Jewish: **Itu** son of Abah (*CAP* 6: 16 [464 B.C.E.]), **Atarshuri** son of Nabuzeribni (*CAP* 8: 27f, 9: 16 [460/459]), **Bitia**, son of Mannuki (Kraeling 1: 10 [451]), **Peteisi** son of Nabunathan (*CAP* 14: 11 [440]), **Rawhshana**, son of Nergalshezib (Kraeling 8: 9 [416]), **Nabutukulti**, son of Nabuzeribni (*CAP* 28: 14f [440]), and **Shewahram** son of Eshemran (Kraeling 11: 12 [402]). Most of the eight texts by these scribes bear certain features in common: at least six were drawn up in Syene, residence of the Arameans (*CAP* 6: 17, 8: 28, 9: 16, 14: 12; Kraeling 8: 1, 11: 1, 12), and only one in Elephantine (*CAP* 28: 1, 15); all or several of the witnesses in four documents (*CAP* 6, 14; Kraeling 1, 8) were Arameans, that is, local residents; the scribal hand is either extreme (Kraeling 1) or semi-extreme (*CAP* 6, 8, 9, 28; Kraeling 8, 11) with only one specimen of the more conservative semi-formal (*CAP* 14). Recourse to an Aramean scribe of Syene rather than a Jewish one from Elephantine is explicable in three cases: the adoption proceedings took place in the presence of Vidranga, garrison commander resident at Syene (Kraeling 8: 2f); the loan of grain was made from one resident at Syene (Kraeling 11: 2); the builder who was party to the contract was resident at Syene

(CAP 14: 2). Why the Jewish parties in the remaining documents turned to Aramean scribes is not apparent.¹

Of the six Jewish scribes three appear in the early part of the century and two of these draw up their own documents: Hosea, son of Hodaviah (CAP 2: 1f, 18 [484; compare CAP 3]), and Gemariah, son of Ahio (CAP 11: 1, 16 [479]),² while Pelatiah, son of Ahio (CAP 5: 15 [471]), was commissioned by Mahseiah son of Jedaniah. With the same patronymic, Pelatiah and Gemariah may have been brothers. Two Aramean scribes with the same patronymic, but separated by fifty years, may have been grandfather and grandson: Atarshuri, son of Nabuzeribni (CAP 8: 27f, 9: 16 [460/459]), being the elder and Nabutukulti, son of Nabuzeribni (CAP 28: 14f [410]), being the younger. Two of the three remaining Jewish scribes were most certainly father and son: Nathan, son of Ananiah, wrote four (CAP 10: 20 [456]; Kraeling 2: 14 [449]; CAP 13: 17 [446], 15: 37 [435?]) and possibly six (CAP 47, 48) of our texts; while his son Mauziah may have begun his scribal activity during the lifetime of his father (Kraeling 14 [446?]):³ he wrote six of our texts (Kraeling 4: 22 [434]; CAP 20: 16 [Elul, 420]; Kraeling 7: 42 [Tishre, 420]; CAP 25: 17 [416], 18: 3 [date?], 45: 9 [so restore!⁴ 413]) and one (CAP 38: 12) and perhaps two of the letters (CAP 41). A contemporary of Mauziah was Haggai, son of Shemaiah, who drew up five, maybe six, of our texts (Kraeling 3: 23sl [437], 5: 15f [simply 'Haggai', 427], 9: 22 [404], 10: 17 [Adar, 402], 12: 32 [December, 402]; CAP 35 [? 400]). Mauziah and Shemaiah were two of the five Jewish communal leaders during the temple crisis (CAP 33: 2f). Their scribal hand, as well as that of the other Jewish scribes except for Pelatiah, was semi-formal; the latter's was semi-extreme. Thus, though we know more Aramean scribes than Jewish, the latter, judging by their scribal hand, were, with one exception, 'professional' while the former, likewise with one exception (Peteisi), were 'occasional'. At least eight of the ten contracts drawn up by the Temple servitor Ananiah, son of Azariah, were written by the three Jewish scribes: Nathan (Kraeling 2), Mauziah (Kraeling 4, 7), and Haggai (Kraeling 3, 5, 9, 10, 12).

¹ For discussion of the epigraphic style of the scribes from Elephantine cf. J. Naveh, *The Development of the Aramaic Script*, Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, v/1 (Jerusalem, 1970), pp. 31ff.

² For reconstruction of line 1, cf. R. Yaron, 'The Schema of the Aramaic Legal Documents', *JSS*, 2 (1957), 42f, Porten, *Jews*, p. 108

³ Cf. B. Porten, 'The Restoration of Fragmentary Aramaic Marriage Contracts' in *Gratz College Anniversary Volume* (Philadelphia, 1971), pp. 244ff.

⁴ Cf. Naveh, *Aramaic Script*, p. 23, n. 72

Despite the schematic and formulaic nature of the legal contracts, individual scribes developed personal peculiarities of use and spelling, and we may call attention to five such features of Haggai as distinct from Mauziah: preference for the form 'm, 'still' (Kraeling 3: 16, 19, 9: 21, 10: 11, 14) rather than 'pm (CAP 20: 15, 25: 16; Kraeling 4: 16); use of the Persian words 'drng, 'guarantor', hnbg, 'partnehngyt, 'associate' (Kraeling 5: 5, 9: 18, 10: 12, 12: 27), first appearing in 427 (Kraeling 5) and used by other scribes ('drng [Kraeling 11: 8f]; bngyt whnbg' [CAP 43: 9]), but not by Mauziah where expected (CAP 20: 10f; 25: 9ff); use of the expression qbl 'l...l, 'complain against... to' (Kraeling 9: 19f, 10: 12f, 12: 28), found in other scribes (CAP 8: 13, 10: 12, 18, 47: 7; Kraeling 1: 5f; compare CAP 6: 16), but not in Mauziah where possible (Kraeling 4: 12ff; CAP 20: 10ff, 25: 9ff); the monetary precision ksp sr(y)p, 'pure silver' (Kraeling 5: 15, 9: 20, 10: 11, 12: 30) likewise used by other scribes (CAP 5: 7, 28: 11; Kraeling 11: 6), but never by Mauziah; distinct form or spelling of foreign names — tpmt (Kraeling 5: 2, 11, 18, 12: 1, 3, 11, 24, 35), bgzšt (Kraeling 3: 2, 10, 23, 25, 12: 4, 12, 31) and štbr (Kraeling, 3: 2, 8) rather than Mauziah's tmt (Kraeling 4: 2, 6), bgzwt (Kraeling 4: 3) and štybr (Kraeling 4: 3, 11) respectively. On the other hand we may single out at least two forms of expression favoured by Mauziah: the expanded genitive with zy, 'of rather than the simpler construct or apposition, as in the expressions tkwnh zy ksp, 'cash of silver' (Kraeling 7: 5f; contrast ksp tkwnh, 'silver cash' [CAP 15: 6]) and 'bygrn' zy ksp, 'indemnity of silver' (CAP 20: 14f, 25: 15; Kraeling 7: 31) rather than 'b(y)grn(') ksp, 'indemnity, silver' (CAP 28: 10, 43: 6, Kraeling 5: 8, 14, 6: 17, 8: 7, 9: 20, 10: 10, 14, 12: 30) or ksp 'bgrn, 'silver indemnity' (Kraeling 11: 6) used by other scribes; and the formula 'from this day forever' (CAP 20: 9f; Kraeling 4: 5, 7: 4, 14: 4) rather than the common 'from this day and for ever' (CAP 8: 9, 14: 7, 15: 4, 28: 7, 43: 4, [8], Kraeling 2: 4) used by the other scribes (Haggai twice has the unique plural form 'lmn [Kraeling 3: 11, 12: 23] rather than the singular 'lm and once a dittography and no conjunction: 'from this this day forever' [Kraeling 10: 8]).

The existence of individual stylistic peculiarities did not mean stylistic rigidity. Not only did the three professional scribes vary their formulation of stereotyped phrases and clauses from document to document, but even within the same text a repeated expression would be varied. Haggai wrote four documents regarding Ananiah's house, a sale contract in 437 (Kraeling 3); two gift contracts, one in 404 (Kraeling 9) and the other in March 402 (Kraeling 10); and a sale contract in December 402 (Kraeling 12). Three examples may be cited as illustrative of variations from document to document: (1) The formula for introducing the boundaries has five variations, appearing in two different forms in the

final sale contract: 'And behold these are the boundaries' (Kraeling 3: 7); 'And behold the boundaries' (Kraeling 9:8); 'And this (*sic!*) are its boundaries' (Kraeling 10: 3); 'And behold this (*sic!*) are the boundaries' (Kraeling 12: 8f) and in the same document, 'This (*sic!*) are its boundaries' (Kraeling 12: 16f). (2) The order in which the boundaries are listed varies three times in four texts: above-below-east-west (Kraeling 3: 7-10); east-above-below-west (Kraeling 9: 8-11); east-west-above-below in the two texts written during the same year (Kraeling 10: 3-6, 12: 17-21). (3) The thought chain 'you - your children - a donee' has various formulations; moreover, there are three variations of the third link in the chain: 'he to whom you desire to give (it)' (Kraeling 3: 12, 14ff); 'you may give it to whomever you wish' (Kraeling 10: 21); 'anyone to whom you give (it) as a gift' (Kraeling 12: 23, 26, 31).

In addition to distinctive features and variations a third scribal characteristic should be noted - symmetry or patterning. Just as the documents have formulaic expressions, so they have a schema and that for the deeds of conveyance, marriage, and loan respectively has been worked out.¹ But no more than formulae meant verbal rigidity did schema mean structural rigidity. Each text, even within the same category, had its own structure and balance of clauses. We may cite three different kinds of examples to illustrate this principle of structural variation. (1) Non-suit clauses: each conveyance contract has a double clause restraining the donor/vendor/claimant or his dependants from further contesting the transaction and imposing a penalty should such an attempt be made. When expressed in full, well-balanced form such clauses might either take on an *abab* pattern, twice favoured by Haggai (Kraeling 3: 12-19, 10: 9-15), or an *aabb* pattern favoured by Mauziah (Kraeling 4: 12-16). The former pattern is 'we shall not be able to sue' - 'should we sue' (*ab*); children shall not be able to sue' - 'should they sue' (*ab*). The latter pattern is 'we'-'children' (*aa*); 'should we' - 'should children' (*bb*). But both scribes might reduce the four elements to two, either by elimination - 'children'-'should they' (Kraeling 9: 18-21 [Haggai]) - or combination - 'we and children shall not be able to sue' - 'should we and children sue' (*CAP* 20: 10-16 [Mauziah]) - thus creating a simple *ab* pattern. Or both scribes might create an imbalanced pattern of *aab* - 'we...sue you' - 'we...sue your children' - 'should we sue you and your children' (*CAP* 25: 9-17 [Mauziah]) - or one of *aaab* - 'I...sue you' - 'I...sue children' - 'children...sue' - 'whoever sues' (Kraeling 12: 24 31 [Haggai]). (2) Repetition and interweaving of key words in a sevenfold pattern of

¹ Cf Porten, *Archives*, pp 334ff with bibliography.

aa-bb-aba: 'released' - 'released' (*aa*); 'not have right to' - 'not have right to' (*bb*); 'released' - 'not have right to' - 'released' (*aba*) (Kraeling 5: 3-10 [Haggai]). This sevenfold repetition and the interplay of the positive 'you are **released**' and negative 'no one has right to **you**' link together, **in** this unique emancipation document, three sections - transaction, non-investiture, guarantees for future. (3) A sixfold **chiastic** symmetry which links up seven clauses in two **non-adjacent** sections; each of four clauses in the transaction section is marked by the word 'sold' and each of three double clauses in the guarantees-for-future section **is** marked by the word 'sue' (Kraeling 3 [Haggai]):

A	1	We SOLD house of <i>Ippuliya</i> whose <i>condition is</i> _____	(3-5)
	2	We SOLD for <i>price</i>	(5-7)
B	3	<i>Boundaries</i> of house we SOLD _____	(7-10)
C	4	We SOLD and <i>withdrew</i>	(10-11)
C	5	We cannot SUE for house we sold... <i>withdrew</i>	(12-16)
B	6	Children cannot SUE for house whose <i>boundaries</i> .. .	(16-19)
A	7	If stranger SUE... <i>house like yours unless Ippuliya.. .price</i>	(19-23)

Despite the various niceties and individual finesses of which the professional scribes were capable, the legal contract was not a polished text. It abounded **in** erasures and supra-linear additions, apparent grammatical and spelling errors, and occasional incongruencies between the Babylonian and Egyptian dates at the head of most documents (*CAP* 10; compare *CAP* 8, 9). The numerous erasures and additions in a marriage contract drawn up by Mauziah enable us to sense the dickering that went on between the proprietor of the bride and groom up to the last minute (Kraeling 2). A sale contract drawn up by Haggai breaks off in the middle of line 10 and starts over again from the beginning, leaving the rejected text intact and enabling us to trace the inaccuracies which led him or one of the parties to insist on a new start (Kraeling 12). That the scribe could produce a polished piece when necessary may be seen from the two drafts of the letter to Bagothi (*CAP* 30, 31), where the second draft (*CAP* 31) contains some forty corrections in twenty-nine or thirty lines of text. A legal contract, **tied** and sealed so as not to be opened except in case of legal dispute, did not require the same precision and external appearance as a letter to be read by the governor of Judah.

FAMILY ARCHIVES

Over a period of some 50 or 60 years a family would accumulate an archive of ten or eleven legal contracts safeguarding personal or property rights. Two **archives** have been preserved, one of the Jewish

temple official Ananiah, son of Azariah, married to the Egyptian slave girl Tamut; and the other of the woman Mibtahiah, aunt of the communal leader Jedaniah, son of Gemariah. Ananiah's much-emended marriage contract (Kraeling 2) indicates the equilibrium established in his triangular situation and incidently informs us that the couple already had a son named Pilti. Tamut had full rights as wife; Ananiah had full rights as father; and Tamut's master Meshullam, son of Zaccur, retained full rights as slave owner. There was no *mohar* and the dowry was negligible. Both parties enjoyed the right of divorce, while Pilti reverted to Meshullam should Ananiah exercise that right. Meshullam could apparently snatch Pilti away from Ananiah upon payment of 50 shekels. In case of death, the surviving spouse took control of the joint property.

A dozen years after their marriage contract was drawn, Ananiah purchased a run-down house for fourteen shekels from the Caspian couple, Bagazushta and Ubil. It adjoined the royal storehouse and lay across from the temple of YHW. The deed (Kraeling 3) accorded Ananiah the right to dispose of the property as he saw fit, and over the next thirty-five years he ceded part to his wife, part to his daughter, and the remainder to his son-in-law. The gift to Tamut (Kraeling 4) was possibly made after the birth of their daughter, Jehoishma; upon death of either spouse, his or her portion was to devolve upon the two children. The gift to Jehoishma (Kraeling 6) was apparently first made at the time of her betrothal to Ananiah, son of Haggai, and was twice reconfirmed in revised form in later documents (Kraeling 9, 10). Jehoishma had been born a handmaiden to Meshullam, and in his old age he emancipated and adopted mother and daughter (Kraeling 5). Thus Jehoishma's marriage contract was drawn up between the groom and her legal brother Zaccur, son of Meshullam, who provided her with a handsome dowry, including the refunded *mohar*, of $78\frac{1}{8}$ shekels. Both parties enjoyed freedom of divorce¹ but in certain circumstances the $7\frac{1}{2}$ shekel divorce penalty fell not on the initiating party but on his opposite number: on Ananiah, if he took another wife; on the party denying the other conjugal rights. Should Ananiah die before Jehoishma, and the couple be childless, she was to succeed to his possessions as long as she did not remarry. Should she, being childless, predecease him, he would inherit her possessions (Kraeling 7). Eighteen years after their marriage, Ananiah, son of Haggai bought the unceded part of his in-laws' house for thirteen shekels (Kraeling 12) and about the same time took a loan of emmer from Pakhnum, son of Besa (Kraeling 11).

¹ The woman's right of divorce, evident in all three Elephantine contracts, was common in Egypt, found elsewhere in the Near East and may not have been absent from Israel; cf. Porten, *Archives*, pp. 209ff, 261f. [The *mohar* was a price paid for a wife. Eds.].

The family archive of **Mibtahiah** reveals a woman of means. During her lifetime she acquired three houses (*CAP* 8, 13, 25), three husbands (*CAP*, 9, 14, 15), and at least three slaves (*CAP* 28). Her first house she acquired upon the death of her first husband (compare *CAP* 25), the Jewish soldier **Jezeniah**, son of **Uriah**. Her second husband was the Egyptian builder **Pia**, son of **Pahi**, from whom she was divorced. Her **third** marriage was likewise with an Egyptian builder, **Eshor**, son of **Seho**. **Ezra** (9 to 10), **Nehemiah** (13: 23ff) and **Malachi** (2: 10ff) condemned intermarriage, which pervaded all strata of the post-exilic community in Judah (**Ezra** 10: 18-44), and it was eventually outlawed in the pact subscribed to by the whole community (**Neh.** 10: 31). What **kind** of feelings it aroused at Elephantine is unknown, but judging from the paucity of mixed names it was not a serious problem numerically. The **onomastic** and/or marital assimilation of the neighbouring Arameans was much greater. Apparently **Eshor** was absorbed into the Jewish community, as was the handmaiden **Tamut** since all their children bore Hebrew names, and **Eshor** himself is later known as **Nathan** (*CAP* 25: 3, 28: 2). **Mibtahiah** followed the prevalent practice of **papponymy** and named one son after her father, **Mahseiah**, and the other after her grandfather, **Jedaniah**. Upon their mother's death the two boys inherited her property, including the house she took over from her first husband (*CAP* 25) and four slaves (*CAP* 28). The brothers divided two of the slaves between them in a document drawn up just five months before the destruction of the temple (*CAP* 28). Unlike the **Ananiah** archive, the **Mibtahiah** family archive does not extend into the post-destruction period and we wonder how that event affected these brothers, whose houses also lay adjacent to the temple (*CAP* 13: 13ff, 25: 4ff).

FINALE

As indicated, the Jewish temple was **probably** restored after considerable diplomatic activity and financial expenditure, though without the right to offer up animal sacrifices as before. Not long afterwards, however, the Jewish community disappears from our eyes. Persian rule in Egypt was ended by the rise of the local ruler **Amyrteus**. The change at Elephantine took place some time between 18 January 401 (*CAP* 7: 1) and 19 June 400 (*CAP* 35: 1). The reign of **Amyrteus** was short-lived and a fragmentary letter to the Jew, **Islah**, at Elephantine of 1 October 399 reported the seizure of power by **Nepherites** (*Kraeling* 13). This is the latest dated document and comes almost 100 years after the earliest Elephantine contract (495 [*CAP* 1]). And so stands revealed before us a century of **Diaspora Jewish** life from the **time** of **Ezra** and **Nehemiah** which, but for these papyri, would have vanished forever.