Elephantine in Context

Edited by
REINHARD G. KRATZ
and BERND U. SCHIPPER

Mohr Siebeck

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Elephantine in Context

Studies on the History, Religion and Literature
of the Judeans in Persian Period Egypt

Edited by
Reinhard G. Kratz and Bernd U. Schipper

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Preface

The Persian period has long been considered a "dark era" in Israel's history. For this reason, research has mainly focused on the depiction of the era illustrated by the Bible and has perceived the form of Judaism described in the books of Ezra-Nehemiah as typical for the Persian period. Hence, a spectacular discovery of archaeological relics and epigraphic sources was hardly noticed: The military colony from the Persian period located at the island of Elephantine in the Nile, on the border between Egypt and present-day Sudan. Although these had been known for more than one hundred years, Old Testament research had only noticed them selectively and superficially, if at all. This historical desideratum was remedied by a research project titled "Elephantine in Context," which was conducted between 2015 and 2019 by Bernd U. Schipper (Berlin) and Reinhard G. Kratz (Göttingen) in cooperation with Bob Becking (Utrecht) and funded by the German Research Association (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG). Further members of the team were Dr. Giulia Grassi (Göttingen) and Dr. des. Ann-Kristin Wigand (Berlin).

The basic approach of the project was to consciously break with a research tradition focusing on the Judeans (Jews) mentioned in the epigraphic evidence from Elephantine and instead investigate the military colony in a broader historical context. This approach is justified by the fact that there were not only Aramaic but also Demotic and Egyptian-hieratic papyri found at Elephantine. Therefore, from the very beginning, the project closely correlated the analysis of the Aramaic with the Egyptian papyri, which are kept in the Berliner Papyrussammlung (Berlin collection of papyri) – a project initiated in 2014 by Verena Lepper, trustee of the collection of papyri of the Egyptian Museum of the National Museums Berlin and funded by a Starting Grant of the European Research Council (ERC).

During three annual workshops (2016–2018) and a panel at the "International Meeting" of the Society of Biblical Literature in Berlin (2017) the intermediate results of the project and possible further research topics were discussed with national and international experts. These workshops resulted in the present volume. Due to the nature of the topic, most contributors specialize in the field of Egyptology, but Semitic and Jewish studies are also represented. The book examines the three main subjects of our research project: society and administration (1), religion (2), and literature (3). The case studies presented in this volume affirm the approach of the project. The island of Elephantine hosted a multicultural society with several interactions between the Egyptians and the other in-

habitants, whether Judeans (Jews), Phoenicians, Carians, Medes, Persians, or other ethnic groups. This interaction was not only caused by conditions on the island itself with a living quarter where the different ethnicities lived side by side but also by the fact that Elephantine was an important administrative center for the Persian authorities. The Persians were interested in a bilingual multicultural elite which could serve in the administration of Egypt.

In the first section of this volume on *Society and Administration* in context, *Giulia Grassi* deals with the question of defining and identifying ethnicity in the multicultural environment of Elephantine. In particular she investigates "the apparently most obvious indicator of ethnicity, ethnonyms, with a particular focus on the *nisbe* 'Aramean'." She also discusses personal names, as far as they are related with ethnonyms. "The analysis of the relationship between names and ethnonyms should show how anthroponyms may be used as indicator of ethnicity."

Holger Gzella investigates the scribal culture of the Persian Administration both in letters and in non-documentary, literary texts such as the Bisutun inscription and the "Words of Ahiqar" (for the latter see also section 3, especially the contributions of J. D. Moore, J.-F. Quack and R. G. Kratz). In the letters he observes "largely fixed templates with a clear structure, standardized salutation and politeness formulae (depending on the hierarchical relationship between the sender and the addressee), and a shared set of expressions for the most common pragmatic purposes." The literary documents reveal "the intellectual basis of the scribal habits" and "the underpinning education of the ideal of the loyal clerk." The paper also hints to the reception of the scribal habits and ideals in biblical literature: "When the institutions of Palace and Temple lost their function as the dominant markers of identification in an increasingly cosmopolitan environment, the inherited type of the loyal and competent government official fed into the new ideal of the learned scribe as the carrier of theology and religious practice. Ezra and Daniel in particular became suitable role models for successfully finding one's way in both the secular and the sacred sphere."

The third contribution to this section from *Alexander Schütze* deals with legal traditions. The aim of his paper is "to reevaluate how Aramaic and Demotic legal documents from Persian Period Egypt are related to each other in terms of the legal clauses employed." Schütze analyzes two types of legal formulations, the transfer and receipt clauses in sale documents and judicial oaths in legal disputes. In both cases he detects an analogy or rather an adoption of Demotic legal tradition in the Aramean documents and concludes: "Thus, Aramaic scribes not only included Demotic legal clauses in their legal documents but took over a particular document type because the validity of these documents strongly depended with their accordance to Egyptian law. This legal context of Persian Period Egypt should be taken into account more seriously when discussing the formulary of Aramaic legal documents from Elephantine." The same holds true for

the religious context which is the focus of section 2 (see especially the contribution of A. von Lieven and B. Schipper).

Finally, *Sylvie Honigman* offers an insight in the aftermath of the military colony at Elephantine and investigates the similar evidence of Edfu and Thebes in the Hellenistic and Roman eras. While the relationship between these two colonies is still unclear, Honigman assumes "that a single colony arrived in Egypt under the second Persian domination and was settled in Edfu" and "following the outbreak of the Great Revolt of the Thebaid in ca. 207/6 BCE, either part or the entire colony was resettled in Thebes." Aramaic sources and Jewish personal names in Greek and Demotic documents tell the history of an Aramaic-speaking Judean colony which was "apparently organized in the same way as the military colonies of foreigners in Syene, Elephantine" with their own judges, scribes, and priests, serving the kings, building temples, and paying taxes. Together, the two colonies in Edfu and Thebes "cast new light on the history of these Aramaic-speaking populations and their descendants in Upper Egypt under Ptolemaic and Roman rule."

The second section of this volume places *religion* at Elephantine in context. *Alexandra von Lieven* provides an overview of the Egyptian religion on the Island in the Persian period. Since authentic sources from this time are missing, her reconstruction relies on slightly earlier sources from the 26th Dynasty and later sources from Hellenistic and Roman times, presupposing a continuity of the religious phenomena. Her paper concentrates on the main gods in the Pantheon, deified human beings, animal cult, and – for the "intellectual aspects" – the remains of the local temple library in Papyri from Hellenistic Elephantine.

Collin Cornell and *Brent A. Strawn* raise the provoking question as to whether the religion of the Judeans of Elephantine is a "Pidgin." With this labeling, the paper intends to find a way around the alternative explanations discussed in scholarship that the Judean religion at Elephantine is either a "fossil remnant of not yet reformed Judaism in a distant land" (J. Wellhausen) or a phenomenon of syncretism with an adopted "pagan worship" as a result of contact with the Aramean neighbors at Elephantine (B. Porten). To make the case, the paper discusses three issues: "the polytheistic greeting formula encountered in the letters"; "the divine triad found in the donation list"; and "the equation of Yhw with 'the God of Heaven' in Jedaniah's letter to Bagohi." The paper comes to the conclusion "that understanding Elephantine Judean religion as a kind of pidginized language provides a better and more accurate interpretation than either of the two primary options offered heretofore."

The following two contributions turn to the famous event of the destruction and rebuilding of the Judean temple of Yaho at Elephantine attested in several documents. *Bob Becking*, after discussing and disputing some of the explanations of the event in terms of a religious conflict, proposes a fresh approach using the cultural-anthropologist Clifford Geertz's concept – originally developed for the

interpretation of human behavior – of a "thick description" looking for 'clues' in the texts. Following his "thick description" of the events, Becking concludes that "the demolition of the Yehudite temple was not an isolated event, but part of the Egyptian attack on vital and symbolic elements of the Persian rule."

In contrast, *Bernd U. Schipper*, who also contextualizes the event in the wider historical and political situation of the Judean colony in Egypt under Persian administration, proposes a new religious explanation of the destruction of the temple of Yaho. According to Schipper, the burnt offering of cattle, sheep, or goats could have been understood as a challenge to the official sacrifice at the temple of Khnum. The sacrifice of a goat, for example, could have been interpreted as the destruction of Apophis, the enemy of the gods, which was the privilege of the temple of Khnum. In short, the burnt offering in the Yaho temple meant interference with the autonomy and rights of the official cult of Elephantine, namely that of the god Khnum. As a consequence, the cultic practice – with the abandonment of burnt-offerings at the rebuilt temple – could be seen as an attempt to create clear boundaries between the main temple of Khnum and the lower sanctuary of the god Yaho.

The third section of this volume is devoted to the *literature* found in or attached to the context of Elephantine. Three articles deal with the "Words of Ahiqar." *James D. Moore* presents and discusses some new readings on a papyrus of the Berlin collection (P. 13446) and puts them in context of new developments in Ahiqar research. *Joachim Friedrich Quack* provides an overview of the Demotic fragments in relation to the story and proverbs of Ahiqar based on his new edition of the relevant material which is simultaneously published elsewhere. *Reinhard G. Kratz* addresses the question of whether the two literary pieces found in Elephantine – the composition headed *The words of one named Aḥiqar* and the Aramaic version of the Bisitun inscription of Darius the Great – "are significant examples of the literature known to the Jewish (or, rather, Judean) colony and, if they were, how they fit into the historical and cultural context of the colony."

The subsequent two articles are focused on Papyrus Amherst 63 and its potential relation to the Arameans and Judeans on Elephantine. In the first contribution, *Tawny L. Holm* provides a thorough analysis of the anthology of Aramaic texts in Demotic script, relying on her own forthcoming edition of the papyrus, to appear in the SBL-WAW series. The article discusses several issues such as the people behind the papyrus, contents and purpose as well as the relations to Elephantine regarding deities, festivals, sacrifice and temples, and literature. The overall impression is that the papyrus – dated to the 4th century BCE – "represents a mixed community of Arameans in Egypt with perceived connections to Syria, Mesopotamia, Samaria, Judah, and possibly western Iran." Very similar to the evidence found in Elephantine, the texts "seem to reveal a unified diversity" based on a "religious or cultural landscape of nostalgia," which "included

a remembrance of lost lands, cities, and cult centers (among these the still un-explained geographical name 'Rash') alongside appeals to multiple deities from across the Near East for renewal and rejuvenation."

A different interpretation of the evidence is provided by *Karel van der Toorn*, who gives an insight into his edition and historical evaluation of Papyrus Amherst 63 recently published in the series AOAT (2018). Focusing on the "Israel-ite section" of the papyrus, van der Toorn presents his hypothesis that both the Judean Arameans at Elephantine and the people originally behind the papyrus were Samarians who lived for about a century in the environment of Palmyra. There they became Arameans and adopted the language and several Aramean deities associated with Bethel before they – together with Syrians and Babylon-ians from Palmyra – migrated to Egypt. "In Egypt, they eventually became part of the Judean diaspora – and in the end embraced a Jewish identity."

The editors are glad to finally present the fruits of the project "Elephantine in Context" and the several workshops to the academic public, in the hope that this volume will stimulate further research. We would like to thank all contri-butors for their important studies covered in this volume and the academic ex-change with them as well as with others who participated in the workshops (in alphabetical order): Erhardt Graefe (Münster), Sebastian Hoedt (Berlin), Friedhelm Hoffmann (Munich), Jan Moje (Berlin), Kim Ryholt (Copenhagen), Günter Vittmann (Würzburg). Furthermore, we wish to thank Verena Lepper for the cooperation with the Papyrussammlung des Ägyptischen Museums der Staatlichen Museen Berlin and our staff Moritz Prechtel (Göttingen), Berenike Brandes, Yannik Ehmer (both in Berlin) for their help with the preparation of the manuscript. Our special thanks go to Julius Albrecht, Carmen Bluhm, Anto-nia Eckhardt, Dr. Stefanie Rudolf (Berlin), and Sarah Kilian (Göttingen) for the preparation of the indices and the correction of the proofs.

Göttingen and Berlin, January 2021
Reinhard G. Kratz and Bernd U. Schipper

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1 Society and Administration

"Do We Know the Arameans?" (SAA 17, 176)

The Use of Ethnonyms
in the Aramaic Documents from Egypt*

GIULIA FRANCESCA GRASSI

Introduction

The Aramaic documents from Egypt are extremely important for the evaluation of the presence of foreigners in Persian Egypt and of their interactions. Aramaic was used as a written language by a considerable part of the Semitic-speaking immigrant community. In addition, Aramaic was chosen as the administrative language in the Achaemenid Empire; as a consequence, Aramaic texts are among the main sources for evidence of the Persian presence and administration in Egypt and for the attestation of other groups of foreigners.

Indicators of ethnicity are always hard to interpret, and to detect the different groups can be really challenging, since none of the main criteria (ethnonyms, anthroponyms, and religious terminology/theonyms) can be considered entirely safe.

As regards anthroponyms, I have heard and read several times the remark that personal names cannot be used to build hypotheses of ethnicity; in these cases, the anthroponymy of Contemporary Europe is usually taken as an example.[1] This remark is misleading. Caution is certainly warranted, but the parallel with Contemporary Europe is hardly tenable: the "freedom" and the cultural and semantic opacity which characterize onomastics in Contemporary Europe have very few parallels in world history.[2] If we consider studies of anthroponymy in Europe from Ancient Greece to World War II, or in contemporary societies outside the Western World, we may conclude that name-giving is far from meaningless, both semantically and culturally. Following Lévi Strauss's study of

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[1] E. g. "the onomasticon is a very fragile ground upon which to build hypotheses of ethnicity. A comparison with the onomasticon in most modern European countries calls for caution" (RETSÖ, Arabs, 381).

[2] Cf. CARDONA, Introduzione, 133; CAPRINI, Nomi, 49. For the development of name giving in Europe, and the drastic changes occurred in the Twentieth century see *e. g.* MITTERAUER, Antenati.

the phenomenon,[3] it is clear that names are important taxonomical organizers, which situate an individual within a group and/or a family. Anthroponyms almost always convey a socio-cultural meaning, and name-giving is often a practice by which a society accepts a new member.[4] Of course, one isolated name cannot be enough for determining the ethnicity of its bearer. However, if the name can be compared with other evidence (language, religion, ethic labels etc.), and moreover is part of a well-established onomastic system, there is no reason to treat it with excessive scepticism. The use of different personal names in different regions or the relationship between anthroponymy and religion, or between anthroponymy and ethnos, must be investigated carefully, in order to avoid both excessive confidence and excessive circumspection. We should also stress that religious terminology and ethnonyms, as precise as they seem to be, are sometimes as misleading as anthroponymy.

In this article, I deal with the apparently most obvious indicator of ethnicity, ethnonyms, with a particular focus on the *nisbe* "Aramean." To a lesser extent I take into consideration personal names, as far as they are related with ethnonyms: the analysis of the relationship between names and ethnonyms should show how anthroponyms may be used as indicator of ethnicity – that is, if the anthroponyms associated with an ethnic label are mostly coherent with that label, (e. g. do people called "Persians" tendentially bear Iranian names, or not?).

1. The Corpus[5]

I have counted 1,105 non-literary Aramaic texts (or fragments of texts) from Egypt dated to the first millennium BCE. "Non-literary" means that famous texts such as 'Aḥiqar and the translation of Behistun are not included in the corpus. The majority of the texts is dated to the Acheamenid era; more than a half of the documents originate from Elephantine (631; 57 %), while at least 295 (27 %) were found in the region of Memphis/Saqqara (mainly from Saqqara). The remaining 179 texts (16 %) come from different sites, or they are of unknown origin. Of 1,105 texts, only 70 contain ethnonyms, and 10 more may possibly contain them, for a grand total of 80 texts out of 1,105 (7 %). The number of different ethnonyms ranges between 20 and 26, since the attestation of 5 of them is doubtful (see Appendix), and one is used as anthroponym (D21.3) rather than as ethnic label.

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[3] Levi-Strauss, Pensée.
[4] Cf. Cardona, Ideologie, 6, with further literature.
[5] The following abbreviations for the text are used here (the following number is always the number of the text): A: TAD 1; B TAD 2; C: TAD 3; D: TAD 4; S: Segal, Texts; CG: Lozach-meur, Collection; R: Röllig, Krugaufschriften.

The majority of the ethnonyms in these documents takes the usual Aramaic ending for gentilic/nisbe, *-y/-yʾ* (āy), but there are also a couple of occurrences of the ending *-kn*, likely of Iranian origin.[6] In Semitic studies *Nisbe* is an afformative which occurs primarily in the formation of gentilics/ethnic names (NSB, "ascription," "attribution").

Ethnic labels are not always used in the texts in similar ways. In some cases, they may be used for objects, e. g., Sidonian wine (C3.7) or Persian sandals (B3.8). But even if they are used to designate people, nuances or implications can be significantly different.

Some ethnonyms occur frequently in letters, whereas other ethnonyms are recorded almost exclusively in administrative documents. For example, "Egyptian" and "Cilician" are typical of the first group, "Aramean" and "Caspian" of the second group. "Judean" is situated in the middle, occurring both in letters and contracts. In the first case, ethnonyms are rarely mentioned together with anthroponyms, which are to the contrary frequent in the administrative texts.

"Egyptian" (*mṣry*) is a very common ethnic label; however, as already mentioned, it does not occur in the contracts. Of course, the label "Egyptian" in Egypt it is not distinctive, and it is quite obvious that it is not used in the contracts because it is not as effective ethnic label as, for example, "Choresmian" or "Caspian" in order to define/distinguish someone. Indeed, when people of likely Egyptian origin are mentioned in the contracts, they are never designated by an ethnonym, but rather by their job or professional title.[7]

In the Aramaic texts, "Egyptian" is never a self-definition, unsurprisingly since Egyptians wrote in Egyptian, and the term is not used in order to identify someone by his/her origin. The *nisbe* "Egyptian" never occurs with a proper name.[8] "Egyptians" are always mentioned as a community, and they are often seen in a negative way, especially by the Judeans, and even the satrap Arsames refers to them as rebels (A4.5).

Some other ethnics are not attested in the corpus with proper names: "Arab" (B8.1; C3.28), "Bythinian" (S31 uncertain), "Carian" (A6.2; S26), "Persian" (B3.8), "Sukkien" (D7.24 uncertain), "Susian" (D3.8 doubtful). In contrast to the

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[6] Cp. FOLMER, Language, 213–217. *-kn* is found only in the forms *swnknn* (A4.10), *swnkn* (B5.2), *swnkyʾ* (C3.14), "Syenians"/"Syenian," and *sykn* (B8.6), "Saite." The ethnic label *krtk*, "Cretan," has been interpreted as *krt* + Persian suffix *-k* (FOLMER, Language, 215), or as transcription of Greek Κρητικός (SEGAL, Texts, 20).

[7] It has been rightly stressed that not everyone bearing an Egyptian name should be considered a "true" Egyptian (VITTMANN, Aramaeans, 243–244). However, in the case of the contracts mentioning the job of the bearer of an Egyptian name, I think that an ethnonym would have been preferred, if the man was not a "true" Egyptian.

[8] The only exception could be the *twdrs* (?)/Θεόδωρος in B8.4, if the ethnic label "Egyptian" refers to him; however, this text is dated to the 3rd century BCE, and in the Ptolemaic age the use of the labels "Egyptian" and "Greek" was determined by the preferred language (GOUDRIAAN, Ethnicity).

most common ethnic labels "Egyptian", "Judean," and "Aramean," these terms are very rare in the corpus.

The term *yhwdy* has often been taken into consideration, because its translation and exact meaning are problematic, at least to a certain extent. The term has been translated in English as "Jew," "Jehudite," or "Judean." I prefer the term "Judean" for two reasons. First, it has been convincingly demonstrated that the term *yhwdy*, "Judean," maintained a geographical connotation – i. e. it designates the inhabitants of the region of Judaea, or people originating from that region – until at least 100 BCE.[9] Second, the geographical characterization of "Judean" seems to be fully maintained in Elephantine documents. It seems indeed clear from the documents themselves that the "Judeans" (*yhwdyʾ*) from Elephantine did use this label for designating people related to Judaea. In fact, the nisbe *yhwdyʾ* and the toponym *yhwd* are used interchangeably in two drafts of the famous letter directed to the Persian governor in Judaea (*ḥry yhwdyʾ*, "nobles of the Judeans" in A4.7, 19; *ḥry yhwd*, "nobles of Judaea" in A4.8, 18). Since the writer of that letter also uses the Nisbe *yhwdyʾ* as a general designation for the other members of his social group in Elephantine, it seems quite logical to assume that these "Judeans" living in Elephantine considered themselves to be of Judean origin. On the contrary, people from Samaria, who also are mentioned in the draft, are not called "Judeans." Thus, the original geographical characterization of "Judean" seems to be fully maintained in Elephantine documents.

Differently from "Aram" (see below), the toponym Judaea indicates a specific Near-Eastern region. Moreover, the group of people called *yhwdyʾ* shows a quite strong self-consciousness: in fact, this ethnonym is used both in the contracts and in the letters; in the letters, they call themselves *yhwdyʾ*, and they clearly perceive themselves as a group.

As regards anthroponymy, the proper names borne by persons who are explicitly called "Judean" are either Yahwistic and/or use a possible Hebrew/Canaanite etymology (i. e. there is no case in which the name is more likely to be Aramaic),[10] and the same can be said for their patronymics and even for their papponymics (with one exception: see below). Explicitly called "Judean" are *mḥsyh br ydnyh* (B2.2, B2.3, B2.4); *qwnyh br ṣdq* (B2.2); *[yz]nyh br ʾwryh* (B2.2);

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[9] Cohen, Beginnings; see also Mason, Jews. "Jew" would thus be anachronistic in the Persian age. As regards "Jehudite," it seems rather artificial: a modern creation in order to avoid the anachronistic "Jew" and the geographically characterized "Judean" (For the term "Jehudite," see Becking, Identity).

[10] There are few cases in the Aramaic documents from Egypt in which a Yahwistic name may contain an Aramaic element: a typical example is the name *zbdyh*, since the element *zbd* is most common in the Aramaic anthroponymy. Another case is possibly *ydnyh*, if from *ʾdn*, but if from *dyn*, "judge," it is ambiguous: albeit widespread in Aramaic, the element *dyn* is not unknown in the Canaanean anthroponymy. See Silverman, Values, 141.143–144. In any case, Yahwistic names in Elephantine (the great majority of Yahwistic names come from Elephantine) are constantly associated only with the Judean community, whatever their second element is.

mnḥm and *ʾnnyh* sons of *mšlm br šlmm* (B2.9); *ydnyh* and *mḥsyh* sons of *ʾṣḥwr br ṣḥʾ* by *mbṭḥyh brt mḥsyh* (B2.9); *mšlm br zkwr* (B3.1, B3.6); *ʾnny br ḥgy br mšlm* (B3.13); *mky br gmryh*; *ydnyh br mkyh*; *ʾnnyh br hwšʿyh*; [...] *br šlmm* (CG X11). Other possible occurrences of the ethnic label are associated with *ydnyh* in D2.12 and *mpṭḥyh brt gmryh* and her sister *ʾswry brt gmryh* in B5.5, but these restorations are doubtful (see Appendix).

Of these names, *mḥsyh*, *ydnyh*, [*yz*]*nyh*, *ʾwryh*, *ʾnnyh*, *mbṭḥyh*, *gmryh*, *mkyh*, *hwšʿyh* are overtly Yahwistic, and *ʾnny* and *mky*, according to their distribution, are likely to be short forms of two of them.

The names *mnḥm*, *mšlm*, *šlmm*, *zkwr*, and *ḥgy* are not exclusively Hebrew, but they are used in Judean and Israelite communities, and they do not contain any pagan theonym. The name *zkwr* is linguistically not Aramaic, but rather a Canaanite form, and in an Aramean context it is attested only as the name of the king of Hama in the 9th century BCE.[11] In the Aramaic documents from Egypt, the name is attested among other Hebrew/Yahwistic names, and never with Pagan/purely Aramaic names; its only other occurrence in Imperial Aramaic is on one ostracon from Idumea, where his father bears a Yahwistic name, *yhwkl*.[12] As regards *mšlm*, it is never attested as proper name in Aramean contexts; it is known not only from the Bible, but also in the Hebrew inscriptions.[13] The name *mnḥm* is also Canaanite, being attested in Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Hebrew;[14] its attestation in Aramaic are mostly related to Canaanean contexts, such as the ostracon from Nimrud[15] and an ostracon from Beer Sheba.[16] *šlmm* in Old and Imperial Aramaic is recorded only at Elephantine, and it does not occur in Hebrew or Phoenician. It has been interpreted either as a short form of *šlmyh* or as defective spelling of *šlwmm* (*šālôm* + ending -*ām*).[17] In both cases, the name would be once again related to the Judean community, because of the theophoric element *yhw* in the first interpretation, or because of its phonological form in the latter. Finally, *ḥgy* is well known in Hebrew anthroponymy, and in Egypt is attested mainly among the Judeans, but there are likely exceptions; moreover,

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[11] The origin of this king is disputed. Because of the vocalisation of his name, a Phoenician origin has also been suggested.

[12] ARI I, 283.

[13] Renz, Inschriften, 75; Avigad/Sass, Corpus, 535. The names *mšlm* and *mšlmw*, attested in Palmyrene and Nabatean, are likely Arabic: *mslm* is known in North- and South-Arabian inscriptions (Stark, Names, 97; Cantineau, Nabatéen, 118; Harding, Index, 545).

[14] Gröndahl, Personennamen, 165; Benz, Names, 359–360; Renz, Inschriften, 74; Avigad/Sass, Corpus, 514.

[15] ARI II, 116.

[16] ARI I, 531–532; Maraqten, Personennamen, 87–88. It occurs also on three seals which can be either Aramaic or Ammonite (Avigad/Sass, Corpus, 514), as well as on an Aramaic tablet; in all these cases, the name is recorded without patronym.

[17] The first explanation is supported by Silvermann (Silverman, Values, 182); the second by Kornfeld (Kornfeld, Onomastica, 73) and Zadok (Zadok, Anthroponomy, 107).

the name is attested in Aramaic also outside Egypt,[18] as well as in Phoenician,[19] Palmyrene, Nabatean, and North- and South-Arabian.[20]

The only names which are not Yahwistic nor generically West-Semitic are *'swry* and *'sḥwr br ṣḥ'*, which are Egyptian. Isweri/*'swry* is a female name, and female Egyptian names are sometimes attested among families with a Hebrew/ Yahwistic onomasticon. This is likely due to the fact that female anthroponyms in patrilinear societies are usually less important, and thus less bound to family traditions and often much less predictable.[21] On the contrary, Egyptian male names are rare in the whole corpus among families with a Hebrew/Yahwistic onomasticon. The case of *'sḥwr br ṣḥ'* is a clear demonstration of the importance attributed to anthroponymy by the members of the Judean community. In B2.6, *'sḥwr br ṣḥ'*, who is "builder/architect of the king" (*'rdkl zy mlk*) asks *mḥsyh* for his daughter *mpṭyh* in marriage, and their children are given Yahwistic names: *ydnyh* and *mḥsyh*, who bear the names respectively of the maternal great-grandfather and grandfather. Moreover, if in B2.9 the name of their father is still *'sḥwr br ṣḥ'*, in B2.10 and B2.11 it is *ntn*: entering Judean community, *'sḥwr* took a Semitic name, *ntn*. Maybe *'sḥwr* left his Egyptian name, or maybe he took also a Semitic name, and maintained the Egyptian one for other contexts. Both changing one's name when entering important stages of life (adulthood, marriage etc.), and polynomy are widely attested in anthroponymy.[22] It is indeed possible that the rarity of double names is due to the fact that sometimes different names were used in different contexts, but not all these names are registered in the documents. Even if they are, we cannot usually be certain that the person is the same one recorded with another name in another document: we are able to reconstruct the case of *'sḥwr/ntn* by chance, and it is almost unique in the corpus as a double name, the only exception being probably [*b*]*rznrw br 'rtbrzn hw ptw* in D2.12, a Bactrian who bears an Iranian name (*brnzrw*) with an Iranian patronym (*'rtbrzn*), and an Egyptian alias (*ptw*).[23]

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[18] ARI I, 297–298. Outside Egypt, the name is known in Idumea, in an ostracon from Beer Sheba, in the ostracon from Nimrud, and also on a clay tablet probably from Tell Sheikh Hamad, among non-Hebrew and non-Yahwistic names, his patronym being *šlmn'd*, Salmānu-na'id, containing the pagan theonym S/Šalmān (LEMAIRE, Tablettes, text 13). Note also that none of the Ḥaggay in the Murašu archive has a Yahwistic genealogy (ZADOK, Jews, 24). In the texts of Āl-Yaḫūdu, the name is attested in Yahwistic genealogies (PEARCE/WUNSCH, Documents, 52–53.271): one is son of Mataniā; one is son of Natan-Yāma; even the son of Aḫīqam has a brother bearing a Yahwistic name, Nīr-Yāma (Text 27).

[19] The only occurrence of *ḥgy* is in Cyprus, and the inscription has been considered Jewish (IJO III, Cyp6). However, *ḥgy* is the only legible name, and it is difficult to demonstrate the origin of its bearer.

[20] STARK, Names, 20.87; CANTINEAU, Nabatéen, 93–94 (*ḥgw*); HARDING, Index, 178 (*ḥǧy*). See also GRASSI, Onomastics, 125–126.

[21] See e. g. CAPRINI, Nomi, 59; MITTERAUER, Antenati, 111.

[22] See CAPRINI, Nomi, 75–77, with further bibliography.

[23] This is the only document that explicitly mentions an alias.

Generally speaking, it may be observed that proper names usually "agree" with the ethnic labels attested in these documents. As we have seen, male Judeans bear Yahwistic/Hebrew names. Similarly, people coming from Persia and Central Asia usually bear Iranian names, as is the case for the above-mentioned Bactrian [*b*]*rznrw br ʾrtbrzn*,[24] for a Chorasmian *drgmn br ḥršyn*[25] (B2.2; B2.3), for a Hyrcanian *sḥh*[26] (B8.3), for a Median *ʾtrprn br nysy*[27] (B3.6), and for several Caspians. In the five texts mentioning Caspians (B2.7; B3.4; B3.5; B3.12; C3.8), five Iranian names occur (*drgy*, *bgzšt/bgzwšt*, *bzw*, *štbr/štybr*, *msdy*).[28] One additional name is Anatolian (*brbry*), another possibly mixed Iranian/Semitic (*ʾtrly*),[29] and seven of unknown etymology (*wzybl/wzyblw*, *ḥyḥ*, *ʾwbyl*, *plyn*, *ynbwly*, *ḥmtsn*, and a feminine name to be read *ʾwbl*, *ʾbl*, or *ybl*).

As far as Anatolians are concerned, the only inscription mentioning a Pisidian (D22.25) contain three Anatolian names: "Blessed be the commander *trkmnh* the Pisidian and *trbmy* his *plwt* and *ʾbrmwš* (?) who came to Panah" (*bryk rbh trkmnh pšdyʾ wtrbmy plwth wʾbrmwš zy ʾtw pnh*).[30] Also the Cilician slaves of Arsames (A6.7) bear mainly Anatolian names: *prymʾ*, *ʾmwn*, *tʿndy*, *sdsbnz*, *srmnz*, *pytrʿnz*, *ʾsmrwp*, *mwsrm*, perhaps *kʾ*;[31] only *srk* and *bgprn* are Iranian.[32]

The name of the "Sidonian" *ʿzrbʾl* (D3.40) is actually a very frequent Phoenician anthroponym.[33]

The name of the "Cretan" (*krtk*) *tbrḥš* (B8.3) is Greek Θίβραχος (to the best of my knowledge attested only once in Sparta[34]), whereas his daughter bears an Egyptian name, *tḥmpt*.

The "Ionians" (singular *ywny* or rarely *ywnyʾ*), i. e. "Greeks," who are captains or owners of the ships mentioned in the custom account (ʾAḥiqar palimpsest, C3.7) also bear mostly Greek names, all attested in the *Lexicon of Greek Per-*

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[24] TAVERNIER, Iranica, 151.294.

[25] TAVERNIER, Iranica, 168.363.

[26] TAVERNIER, Iranica, 311.

[27] TAVERNIER, Iranica, 62.124.

[28] TAVERNIER, Iranica, 144.149.168.318. As far as *msdy* is concerned, Tavernier reports *mzdy* (TAVERNIER, Iranica, 244), but no *msdy*; see however PORTEN, Names, 169.

[29] TAVERNIER, Iranica, 472.

[30] See GOETZE, Cilicians, 55. Zilberg (ZILBERG, Dragomans) proposes to consider *trkmn* not a personal names, but rather the word "dragoman," "interpreter," attested in Semitic and possibly of Hittite origin; his translation is thus "Blessed be the commander, *his* Pisidian *interpreter* and Trbmy … [and] *ʾbrmwš*? Who came to Panah." The suggestion is plausible, but the omission of the name in the blessing formula would be anomalous. Another graffito (D22.27) mentions the same persons, with the further specification "the Pisidian of *ʾwgnn*," probably a toponym.

[31] See GOETZE, Cilicians, 55–57.

[32] TAVERNIER, Iranica, 134.309. The name *srk* has been read also *srn*, and considered Anatolian (GOETZE, Cilicians, 56); however, *srk* is a more plausible reading.

[33] BENZ, Names, 167–170.375–376.

[34] Θίβραχος was a Spartan polemarch who fell in the battle of Piraeus and was buried in Kerameikos (Xen. Hell. II, 4, 33), where his tomb was actually found (see RICHER, Aspects, 68).

sonal Names (the number of occurrences is given after each name, according to the online edition of the LGPN): *ʾrgls*/Ἐργῖλος (4), *glprs*/Γλάφυρος (7), *ywkls*/Ἰοκλῆς (2), *mks*/Μίκκος (30), *msks*/Μόσχος (269), *pns*/Φάνης (9) or Φανῆς (39), *prtwkls*/Πρωτοκλῆς (8), *šwmn*/Σωμένης (16) or Σύμενος (2), *šmnds*/Σιμωνίδης (44), *tmkts*/Τιμοκήδης (4).

The only exceptions are *prystn* and *spytk*, both Iranian,[35] and *prytkm*, the origin of which is unknown, but possibly Iranian as well, since it is the patronym of *prystn*. Several other anthroponyms are unfortunately no longer legible in this text.

We may conclude that names usually provide information about the ethnic or geographical origin of their bearers. There are exceptions, of course, but they are relatively rare.

The most exceptions to this may be found with the nisbe *ʾrmy*, "Aramean."

"Aramean" is attested 33 times, but we have only one Aramaic name, *brykʾl*[36] (B8.4; with Egyptian patronymic, *snbnt*,[37] and a brother perhaps bearing an Egyptian name, *šmw*),[38] and one Aramaic patronymic, *nnyšwry* (in this second case, the name of the son is lost and it could have been Aramaic; B4.7).[39] In four cases, the name is Egyptian (with Egyptian patronym, if present): *pḥnwm br bsʾ* (B3.13),[40] *šmw br snbnt* (B8.4); *ptyḥr* (S77);[41] *tḥp/by* (CG258).[42] In a couple of cases, the name of the person called "Aramean" is lost, but the patronymic is Iranian (B8.6; D2.4).[43] In 21 cases, the name is Yahwistic/Hebrew, or at least is part of the names used mostly by the Judean community:[44] *ʾwryh* (B3.9), *ydnyh* (B2.10; B2.11), *mbṭḥyh* (B2.8), *mḥsyh* (B2.1; B2.6; B2.7; B2.11; B7.1), *mlkyh*

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[35] Tavernier, Iranica, 181.314.

[36] The name is otherwise not recorded in Old and Imperial Aramaic, but see the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian transcriptions: Zadok, Semites, 109; Pearce/Wunsch, Documents, 265 (never in Yahwistic genealogies).

[37] Muchiki, Names, 99.

[38] Kornfeld, Onomastica, 94. The interpretation is not sure: see Muchiki, Names, 42 (*šmw* in two Punic inscriptions from Chartage, see also Benz, Names, 419–420), 143–144. *šmw* in Egypt occurs usually among Egyptian names, and Egyptian are also other anthroponyms on an ostracon from Idumea; two more occurrences among the Idumean ostraca are doubtful (ARI I, 796).

[39] I could find no parallel for this name, although the structure divine name + *šūrî*, "DN is my wall" is common among West Semites in Babylonia (Zadok, Semites, 99); see also Maraqten, Personennamen, 118.185 for Old Aramaic.

[40] Kornfeld, Onomastica, 79.87.

[41] Vittmann, Entsprechungen, 220–221.

[42] Kornfeld, Onomastica, 95.

[43] *šyn* is possibly Iranian (Tavernier, Iranica, 43; *Āçina-); *hwbrʾ* is Iranian (Tavernier, Iranica, 203; *Hu-bara-, "cherishing").

[44] Not only the name of the "Aramean," but also the name of his father and grandfather, if known, are Hebrew/Yahwistic. The only exception is the name *bss*, the name of the great-grandfather of the "Aramean" in a rare four generations genealogy: *ʾnny br ḥgy br mšlm br bss*. *bss* can be interpreted as Egyptian (Grelot, Documents, 468) or as Babylonian (Zadok, Anthroponomy, 104); both interpretations are mentioned by Kornfeld (Kornfeld, Onomastica, 44).

(B7.2), *'nnyh/'nny* (B3.8; B3.12), *qwnyh* (B2.1), *mšlm* (B2.7; B3.3), *zkwr* (B3.9; B3.8?), *mnḥm* (B4.6), *ntn* (B4.5), *yslḥ* (B4.5), *mtn* (B5.2).[45]

In other words, there is almost no "Aramean" bearing a characteristically Aramaic name; in turn, a "Babylonian" (*bbly*) bears an Aramaic name (B2.2; *hddnwry*).[46]

We can add that the collective "Arameans" is never recorded: if the term is in the plural, it should be read distributively to refer to two individuals, as in B8.4. Unlike "Judeans," it never occurs with the (implicit) meaning "we;" unlike from "Egyptians," it never occurs with the (implicit) meaning "they." There is apparently no group who called themselves "Arameans" or who was called by others "Arameans."

This lack of evidence for Aramaic names associated with the ethnic label "Aramean," and for "Arameans" used as collective could be due to the scarcity of the documents coming from Syene, where the Arameans were settled.

However, this would not explain why "Aramean" is frequently associated with people who are apparently not "Arameans." I suspect that this phenomenon has to do with the ethnic label itself, which is the most problematic gentilic in Elephantine and the Aramaic sources in general.

There are two problems with interpreting the term *'rmy* as a proper ethnonym that indicates geographical or ethnic origin. First, Aram as geographical entity is not only anachronistic in this period, but also elusive when mentioned in sources from most ancient periods, from the very beginning of its attestation. Second, several persons with Hebrew/Yahwistic names, sometimes even labeled as "Judean," are occasionally also called "Aramean."

2. Aram as Geographic Entity and Aramean as Ethnonym

The question "Do we know the Arameans?" is posed in a fragmentary letter (SAA 17, 176). In it the writer doubts the loyalty and reliability of the Aramean tribes settled in southern Mesopotamia (see below). I have chosen this question for

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[45] The last three names were not discussed above; *mtn* is attested in Old and Imperial Aramaic only in Elephantine, where it occurs in Judean families and is never recorded with pagan theophoric names (see ARI I, 554), whereas it is recorded in Hebrew epigraphs (Renz, Inschriften, 75) and in Phoenician (Benz, Names, 356); *ntn* is extremely frequent in the Aramaic documents from Egypt, and attested also outside Egypt; it is mainly a Hebrew name, and it is recorded in Hebrew epigraphy (Renz, Inschriften, 77), whereas it occurs only once in Old Aramaic (Maraqten, Personennamen, 92); *yslḥ* occurs in Old and Imperial Aramaic only in the documents from Egypt (ARI I, 373), mainly as son of *gdl*.

[46] This name, recorded also in Akkadian transcriptions (Zadok, Semites, 46), occurs a second time in Egypt, and it is one of the extremely rare occurrences of a pagan theophoric name in a genealogy containing a Yahwistic name (*mlkyh br ytwm br hddnwry*; C3.15). The second known "Babylonian" of the corpus (D22.3) bears an Egyptian name, *pb/ty*; his patronym, *šmn*, is of uncertain etymology. The text is a graffito from Masarah dated ca 300 BCE.

the title of my article because I think it is still a very good question, it is still a matter of debate as to who the Arameans were, and who was called "Aramean." Many attempts have been made to explain the fact that the very same person is sometimes labeled as "Aramean" and sometimes as "Judean."[47] However, previous studies on this topic have not looked closely at the attestations of this label beyond the Elephantine manuscripts.

The *nisbe* "Aramean" is extremely rare in the first millennium BCE; moreover, even the geographical term "Aram" is problematic, since it may designate very different regions.

In the Middle Assyrian sources we can find the first indisputable occurrence of the term "Aramean."[48] The land in which Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 BCE), met the Aḫlamû KURAramayyu, "the Aḫlamu of the land of the Arameans,"[49] is impressive, since it includes the majority of the Euphrates basin, as well as a considerable part of the desert and mountainous regions of later Transeuphrates.[50]

The scenario is even more complex, since in a fragmentary chronicle from Assur, dated to the end of the reign of Tiglath-Pileser, the Arameans are located in the Upper Tigris area (modern Iraqi Kurdistan), and this same region is mentioned, together with the lower basin of the Khabur river, as the theatre of the fights of Aššur-bel-kala (1073–1056) "against the land of Aram/the Arameans" (kur*a-ri-me*), recorded on the Broken Obelisk.[51]

Moreover, under the Babylonian king Adad-apla-iddina (1068–1047), "hostile Arameans" (*nakru Aramu*) probably sacked several cities in Babylonia.[52] These texts suggest, on the one hand, that Arameans already in the 11th century were active in an area that includes a significant part of both Mesopotamia and Transeuphrates; on the other hand, that one single region connected with the Arameans is hard to identify, and possibly never existed. The determinative KUR, "Land," was used to designate the Arameans in the most ancient attestations, both in the texts of Tiglath-Pileser (kur*ar-ma*[-*a*]-*ia*meš) and in the texts of Aššur-bel-kala (kur*a-ra-me*) (the Babylonian text dated to reign of Adad-apla-iddina prefers the use of the determinative LÚ, "human being"). The first form, with the gentilic Aramayyu, was abandoned after the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser, whereas the second, which mentions the land of Aramu, became increasingly common.[53] However, this land is not the same in every source, and it seems that kur*a-ra-me* (with variants), especially if followed by the plural marker MEŠ, can

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[47] See recently e. g. KRATZ, Ambassadors; KRATZ, Aramäer; ROHRMOSER, Götter, 6–8; VAN DER TOORN, Ethnicity, with previous bibliography.

[48] For earlier, doubtful occurrences, see LIPIŃSKI, Arameans, 26–35.

[49] RIMA 0.87.1 v, 46–47; see also RIMA 0.87.3 30, and 0.87.4 34.

[50] See recently BUNNENS, Confrontation, and FALES, Ethnicity for further details.

[51] BUNNENS, Confrontation, 256–260.

[52] FRAME, Rulers, B.3.1.1, 9–19; GRAYSON, Chronicles, No. 24, lines 8–10; GLASSNER, Chroniques, n. 45, 227 and 46, 228; cp. BUNNENS, Confrontation, 260–261.

[53] FALES, Ethnicity, 150.

designate the Arameans also as population, and not only a land.[54] The tendency to use "Aram" instead of the gentilic "Aramean" to designate the population is interesting, because it finds parallels in the Bible and perhaps in the Old Aramaic inscriptions (see below).

Later on, in the Assyrian sources from the end of the 8th century to the end of the 7th century BCE, "Arameans" are referred to mainly as deportees or troops and civilians among the tribes along the Middle/Lower Euphrates and Tigris.[55] These tribes are sometimes considered unreliable,[56] even worthy of being deported, and the inhabitants of Nippur went as far as to warn Assurbanipal about the lies of the Arameans.[57] The archives of Nippur provide us the information that the label "Aram" (^{lú}*a-ram/a-ram*) was applied to a rural region around the city.[58]

On the contrary, the Assyrians never refer to the Aramean states and/or to Syria as "Aram": they use either the name of the state, or the generic toponym Ḫatti, which includes the states of Northern Syria and, from the time of Esarhaddon, also the reigns of Syria-Palestine.[59]

From the late 8th century BCE to the 7th century BCE, the *nisbe* "Aramean" is used in Assyria almost exclusively with reference to (1) specific military units in the Assyrian army or (2) the use of the Aramaic language and its script.[60] In the words of Fales, "the people called 'Arameans' all but disappear (…) – they are all 'Assyrians' now – but Aramean ethnicity survives in the form of a distinctive language."[61] In rather different terms, but with a similar consciousness of the ambiguity of the label "Aramean" in the Neo-Assyrian periods, Nissinen has doubts about "the exact demographic counterpart of the designation *ar(a)māyu/arumu* (…) as it may cover the West Semitic population somewhat more broadly than the current scholarly definition of 'Aramean'."[62]

As regards the Bible, the gentilic "Aramaeans" is infrequently used, and there are several regions which may be called "Aram".

"Aramean" is attested in the singular especially in the Pentateuchal material, where it designates Laban four times out of five,[63] and occurs once also in Kings,[64] whereas the only feminine form is attested in 1 Chronicles.[65] The three

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[54] BUNNENS, Confrontation, 254; FALES, Ethnicity, 150.
[55] FALES, Ethnicity, 160–162.
[56] See FALES, Ethnicity, 161.
[57] SAA 18, 199: 11–13. See also FALES, Ethnicity, 161–162.
[58] FALES, Ethnicity, 162.
[59] BAGG, Gewässernamen, 100.
[60] FALES, Ethnicity, 143.164–165. "An Aramaean identity would survive essentially in linguistic-cultural terms" (154).
[61] FALES, Ethnicity, 165.
[62] NISSINEN, Outlook, 283.
[63] Gen 25:20; 28:5; 31:20.24. The fifth occurrence is Deut 26:5.
[64] 2 Kgs 5:20.
[65] 1 Chr 7:14.

occurrences in the plural can be found in Kings and in the corresponding passage in Chronicles, where it is stated that the Arameans wounded king Yoram.[66]

On the contrary, "Aram" is frequently used. Like Aramu in Cuneiform, the term is ambiguous. On the one hand, it fluctuates between the designation of a region and the designation of a population; on the other hand, the region is not necessarily the same in each case.

In the Bible, "Aram" par excellence is the kingdom of Damascus (also called Aram-Damascus), the archenemy of the Israelite kings of the 9th century BCE, whose wars are remembered in Kings and Chronicles. The term could be used both for the region and for its inhabitants, the Arameans, and this second meaning seems to be more frequent.[67] However, "Aram" alone can sometimes designate other Aramean kingdoms,[68] generically Aram in its entirety,[69] or the Aramean troops in the Neo-Babylonian army of Nebuchadnezzar.[70]

Several toponyms in compound with Aram (but sometimes without Aram) are used to refer to regions in which Arameans were in power, or at least present, and also to their population: (Aram-)Damascus, (Aram-)Ṣoba, (Aram-)Beth-Reḥob, (Aram-)Maʿakah, Aram-Naharaim and (Paddan-)Aram (the last two are both located in Upper Mesopotamia, and are mainly known from the patriarchal narratives).[71]

It is thus clear that "Aram" in the Bible designates several different regions and their population, as well as, albeit rarely, the "Arameans" in general.[72]

Even the ancient Aramaic inscriptions are ambiguous about the term "Aram;" moreover, the gentilic "Aramean" is never recorded.

As frequently in the Bible, in one occurrence "Aram" seems to designate the kingdom of Damascus. Zakkur, king of Ḥamat and Luʿash, narrates in a stele found in Tell ʾAfis[73] (approximately 50 kilometers from Aleppo and from Ḥama) and dated to the end of the 9th/beginning of the 8th century BCE that Bar-Hadad, son of Ḥazaʾel, "king of Aram," headed a coalition of kings against him (A, lines

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[66] 2 Kgs 8:28–29; 2 Kgs 9: 15; 2 Chr 22:5.

[67] BROWN/DRIVER/BRIGGS, Lexicon, 74; DUŠEK, Aram, 16.

[68] E. g. in Num 23:7 and Judg 3:10 "Aram" is Aram-Nahraim. Cp. also YOUNGER, History, 96.

[69] For example, the merchants of Solomon are said to purchase horses and sell them to the kings of Hatti and Aram (1 Kgs 10:29 and corresponding passage 2 Chr 1:17). In a passage of Judges, Israelites are said to serve "the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites, the gods of the Philistines" (Judg 10:6). See also BROWN/DRIVER/BRIGGS, Lexicon, 74; YOUNGER, History, 95.

[70] Jer 35:11, where are mentioned "the army of the Chaldeans" and "the army of Aram," where Aram stays obviously for "Arameans."

[71] For details and further literature see YOUNGER, History, 96–99.

[72] I do not deal here with "Aram" as proper name/tribal name (cp. BROWN/DRIVER/BRIGGS, Lexicon, 74; YOUNGER, History, 95).

[73] KAI 202; ARI II, 422.

4–7). Aram in this inscription is usually interpreted as "Damascus," and this is likely correct.

The name Bar-Hadad occurs also on a dedication to Melqart found in Breğ (near Aleppo), dated around 800 BCE.[74] In this stele, Bar-Hadad, son of Attar-shumki, calls himself "king of Aram." This Bar-Hadad was initially thought to be the king of Damascus, but it is usually accepted that the Bar-Hadad of this stele was in fact king of Arpad,[75] and in this case Aram would be the equivalent of Arpad.

The equivalence between Aram and Arpad seems to be found also half a century later in the treaty of Sefire (ca. 750 BCE), stipulated between the mysterious king of KTK and Matiʿel, who is called "king of Arpad." At the beginning of Sefire I A[76] line 5, after a lacuna at the end of line 4, one can read *wʿm ʾrm klh*, "and with Aram (in) its entirety," probably to be partially reconstructed also in Sefire I B, 3–4 (*wʿm ʾr[m klh]*). After a lacuna at the end of line 5, in line 6 the text runs *kl ʿly ʾrm wtḥth*, literally "all high Aram and its low" (but see below).

The interpretation of Aram in these passages is highly disputed. It could just refer to the entirety of the kingdom of Matiʿel, i. e. Arpad, but even in this case, it is unclear if a geographical area is meant, or rather the population. In the first case, "all Aram" would be applied to the reign of Arpad in its entirety at the moment of the treaty, and "all high Aram and its low" would indicate respectively south and north.[77] The border of this reign, which possibly included also the territory of the former reign of Ḥama,[78] would be given in Sefire I B, lines 8–10 (fragmentary). In the second case, *kl ʿly ʾrm wtḥth* would designate part of the population, which seems plausible in this passage. This would mean "those who were in charge of the local administration" according to Bunnens, and "all Arameans who are on the top and those who are beneath" within the hierarchy according to Dušek.[79]

Others believe that Aram could refer to a region much bigger than the reign of Arpad,[80] and it has been also suggested that *ʾrm klh* and *kl ʿly ʾrm wtḥth* may indicate a sort of "pan-Aramean" consciousness. The term would indicate a military confederation of Aramean kings,[81] which "would have developed into a

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[74] KAI 201; ARI II, 72.

[75] For the discussion about the historical milieu of this inscription, see recently Fales/Grassi, Aramaico, 89–91.

[76] For Sefire I, see KAI 222; ARI I, 402–404.

[77] Kahn, Kingdom; Younger, History, 505–508.

[78] Kahn, Kingdom, 81–82.

[79] Bunnens, Aram; Dušek, Aram.

[80] See for example Mazar, Empire; Lemaire/Durand, Inscriptions, 131; Dupont-Sommer, Stèles, 48; Alt, Staatenwelt, 254; Noth, Hintergrund, 131; Talshir, Relativity, 274–276.

[81] [*mlky*], "kings," is usually restored before *kl ʿly ʾrm wtḥth* (Sefire IA, 5–6), but it is indeed more than doubtful.

more definite territorial entity,"[82] if it would not have been cut off by the Assyrians. However, it has been rightly noted that the inscription of Sefire is a treaty, and that "a contract is never an abstract between not yet existing parties."[83] It is indeed quite difficult to conceive that the king of Arpad, clearly subordinate to the king of KTK, could accept a treaty also in name of other kings who are never mentioned by name in the stele. Moreover, it should be stressed that even the very occurrence of the word "kings" in the inscription is disputable.

In any case, it is clear that even in the most ancient Aramaic inscriptions the term Aram is problematic.

The Akkadian, Hebrew, and Old Aramaic occurrences are thus very ambiguous about the terms "Aram" and "Aramean," and it is obvious that Aram did not designate one specific region. I am inclined to accept the suggestion of Bunnens, who thinks that in the Middle Assyrian and early Neo-Assyrian sources, in the Aramaic inscriptions and in the Bible, the term "Aram" does not designate a specific geographical entity, but rather "any place where Arameans are in power."[84] I would also add, where their population is significant, even if not in power.

Given these data, it is hard to see the term "Aramean" in the documents from Egypt, in which the very first attestations of the *nisbe* "Aramean" in Aramaic occur, is an ethnonym that functions as the others, since it was never associated with one specific region. Moreover, after the reign of Tiglath-Pileser, Aramayyu was rare both in Assyrian and in the Bible, and it is never attested in the Old Aramaic inscriptions.

It is much more likely that its use in the Achaemenid administrative documents is a remnant from the Neo-Assyrian bureaucracy of the 7th century BCE, where, as we have seen above, "Aramean" designated almost exclusively specific military units in the Assyrian army, i. e. "Aramean" soldiers, or someone using the Aramaic language and its script.[85] It is conceivable that the "Aramean" soldiers were soldiers speaking Aramaic, in 7th century Assyria as well as in Achaemenid Elephantine.

The possibility that the *nisbe* is used in its late Neo-Assyrian meaning is strengthened by the fact that the term is otherwise very rare. To the best of my knowledge, it is not attested in the Old Persian texts, nor in contemporary Greek texts,[86] and it is rarely recorded in Egyptian, mostly in doubtful contexts. Two occurrences have been suggested for the second millennium BCE, but they

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[82] GROSBY, Borders, 15.

[83] KAHN, Kingdom, 79.

[84] BUNNENS, Confrontation, 266.

[85] The language was probably one of the major indicators of "Arameaness" from the very beginning: see the lapidary comment by Kuhrt (KUHRT, East, 411): "the general designation 'Aramaeans' mask the fact that they are not a unified group, except in terms of their language."

[86] The only occurrences of the term "Arameans" in Greek may be found in Strabo (who takes it from Posidonius) and in Josephus: see NÖLDEKE, Namen. A discussion about later at-

are not universally accepted, *pꜣ-j-rꜥ-m-w*, "the one of Aram" (with "man" deter-
minative) in a list of place names dated to the reign of Amenhotep III (first half
of the 14th century BCE), and "a town in the district of Aram" in the report of an
officer dated to the end of the 13th century BCE (Papyrus Anastasi III).[87] These
texts would be the only attestations of the name Aram/Aramean in the second
millennium BCE outside the Assyrian sources of the 13th century BCE; the first
one would be indeed the most ancient occurrence. However, the location of this
land heavily depends on the interpretation of the other toponyms mentioned in
the text, and several solutions have been proposed: the region of Damascus,[88]
North-Central Syria,[89] Northern Mesopotamia.[90]

In the first millennium BCE, the number of occurrences is equally scanty and
problematic. In the so-called "Satrap stela" (311 BCE), an ethnonym could be
read as "Aramean," but the reading is uncertain. This region would be located in
Syria-Palestine, and Recklinghausen suggests that "Arameans" could refer also
to the "Judeans": according to him, "Arameans" would be anachronistic as eth-
nonym, and it would be more plausible to consider it a label for an arameophone
population.[91]

In the Ptolemaic period, "The Aramean," occurs as anthroponym in Papyrus
Erbach.[92] Moreover, Zauzich reports that a papyrus dated to the late 3rd cen-
tury BCE possibly contains the mention of an "Aramean," but there is no tran-
scription of the text, and it not clear which term is actually used.[93]

I could not find any other occurrence of the ethnonym *Ỉrm*/"Aramean" in
Egyptian, and no occurrence at all of "Aram" as a toponym in the Demotic texts
from the 8th century BCE to the 5th AD: in these texts, *Ḫr*, "Phoenicia," is some-
times used to refer to Syria in general, but the preferred term to indicate "Syria"
and "Syrian" is by far *Ỉšr*, which can also mean "Assyria"/"Assyrian."[94]

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testations of the gentilic "Aramean" (Greek, Syriac, Arabic) will be included in my Habilitations-
schrift.

[87] See YOUNGER, History, 35–36, who accepts the first occurrence, but not the second one.
LIPIŃSKI, Arameans, 32–34, rejects both of them.

[88] Edel in EDEL/GÖRG, Ortsnamenlisten, 122–123.

[89] YOUNGER, History, 35.

[90] Görg in EDEL/GÖRG, Ortsnamenlisten, 138–160.

[91] VON RECKLINGHAUSEN, Quellen, 151.

[92] VON RECKLINGHAUSEN, Quellen, 151, note 20.

[93] Zauzich (ZAUZICH, Handschriften, 138) seems hesitant about the translation: "Der
Absender berichtet von einem Unglück, das ihn wegen (?) eines Aramäers (?) getroffen hat."

[94] VERRETH, Toponyms, 600–603. See also VITTMANN, Aramaeans, 234. Also several topo-
nyms in Egypt contains the element *Ỉšr*/ *Ỉšwr*; even if they are attested from the early Ptolemaic
period, some of them possibly existed before: see VITTMANN, Aramaeans, 235. The fact that
the same term could designate Syria and Assyria is significant, and we should remember that
even our modern word "Syria" is a clear derivation from "Assyria" (through Greek). There is no
doubt that one of the main (probably, the main) unifying factor in the whole area comprising
Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia was its language, Aramaic.

The idea that "Aramean" in Persian Egypt is mainly used in its Neo-Assyrian meaning of "Arameophone soldier" is corroborated by the fact that *'rmy* is the only nisbe with a high number of occurrences which is almost constantly associated with the army. Of the 33 persons called "Aramean," 21 are explicitly associated with a *dgl*, and the word *dgl* is perhaps simply lost in five more cases (B4.7; B5.5, restored; D2.4; D2.10). Of the remaining seven occurrences, three people called *'rmy* are not explicitly associated with a *dgl*, but they speak before Vidranga in his role of "chief of the army" (B2.10; B3.9). In the last 4 cases, once an *'rmy* is not related to a *dgl*, whereas the man giving him a house is called *'rmy ldgl wryzt* (B2.7); in the second case, from Saqqara, *'rmy* is attested in a broken context: he is maybe a servant, or someone called 'Abdi (B4.7). The last two cases are the only in which the term is attested outside administrative documents: *tḥpy 'rmt'* is recorded on a jar inscription (? CG258), and the Aramean *ptyḥr* is mentioned in a letter from Saqqara – his role being unfortunately unclear (S77). To sum up, in the overwhelming majority of cases, 29 out of 33, the designation "Aramean" is used to reference someone who can be identified as a soldier – the remain four cases are indeterminate.

Finally, it should be stressed that the use of "Aramean" in the meaning "arameophone" would fit very well in the Egyptian context, since the language is in Egyptian "a major criterion of ethnics,"[95] and it has been suggested that the main criterion to distinguish a "Greek" from an "Egyptian" in Ptolemaic Egypt was language.[96]

3. "Aramean" as Synonym of "Judean"?

The terms "Judean" and "Aramean" are frequently considered near synonyms in the literature, and even the term "Judeo-Aramean" has been created in order to designate the colony of Elephantine.[97] However, the people of Elephantine never define themselves "Judeo-Arameans" and the two terms are used, as we have seen, in a very different way.

From the analysis of the term in the previous pages, it should be clear that "Aramaean" cannot be considered a proper ethnic label, and that its use together with "Judean" is not necessarily contradictory. If we understand "Aramean" as "Arameophone," the term could be applied to every person having Aramaic as

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[95] Johnson, Considerations, 205.
[96] Goudriaan, Ethnicity, 92.
[97] The term was created by van Hoonaker (van Hoonacker, Communauté), and already Volterra (Volterra, 'yhwdy') complained about it, but it is still common in the literature; I cannot but agree with Vittmann, who thinks that "the compound 'Judeo-Aramaean' should be better restricted to (attribute) adjectives comprising the Judaeans *and* the Aramaeans alike" (Vittmann, Aramaeans, 231).

her/his native language, i. e. to most people originating from Achaemenid Syria/
Palestine/Mesopotamia, and also the Judeans.[98] Judeans could choose their label
according to the context.

To quote Cliffort Geertz, "Nisbas render men relative to their contexts, but as
contexts themselves are relative, so too are nisbas (…) what level or sort of nisba
is used and seems relevant and appropriate (relevant and appropriate, that is, to
the users) depends heavily on the situation."[99]

The exact situations and contexts are precisely what is hard for us to recon-
struct, but some information may be inferred from the texts. It has been ob-
served that in administrative documents *yhwdy* is much less frequent as *ʾrmy*,
and that neither the ethnos of the contract partner nor the ethnos of the scribe
(as inferred by onomastics) seem to be absolute criteria, in spite of a tendency of
using *yhwdy* in a contract with a non-Judean partner.[100]

Indeed, this tendency is clear. If people involved in the contract are all Judeans
(as inferred from anthroponymy), the nisbe *ʾrmy* is usually preferred (B2.1; B2.7;
B2.10; B2.11; B3.9; B3.12; B4.5; B4.6).[101] There are some exceptions, but it seems
quite clear from the documents that the "default" label in administrative texts is
"Aramean."

"Aramean" is preferred in the texts reporting judicial oaths, maybe for their
official character, even if one of the parties is not Judean. In B7.2 *mlkyh br yšbyh*,
who is called *ʾrmy* and hereditary-property-holder in Elephantine, must de-
clare by *ḥrmbytʾl* that he did not make violence and theft in the house of *ʾrtprd*.
Similarly, in B2.8 *pyʾ br pḥy*, a builder of Syene, withdraws from goods after the
oath made by *mbṭḥyh brt mḥsyh br ydnyh*, called *ʾrmyʾ zy swn*, by goddess Sati.
Finally, in B7.1 someone whose name is lost is accused by *mḥsyh br šybh*, called
ʾrmy zy swn, of having stolen him fish, and asked to swear by Yaho or give him a
compensation. Only in B2.2 *mḥsyh br ydnyh* of the *dgl* of *wryzt* is called *yhwdy*
in a document of withdrawal following an oath.

As regards the ethnic label *yhwdy* in administrative documents, we may note
that it is generally preferred if the contract involves also non-Judeans (again, an
assumption usually based on onomastic; B2.2; B2.3; B3.13; possibly D2.12; the

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[98] But hardly to other populations serving in the army, for example Choresmians or
Carians, for whom Aramaic could have been at the most a second language or a lingua franca
(Carians left conspicuous attestations of their own language in Egypt: the inscriptions from
Egypt are the most important documentation of Carian: see Adiego, Language, 30–128; for
Carians in Egypt, Vittmann, Ägypten, 155–179). We ultimately ignore whether Aramaic was
used as a lingua franca in the Persian army, or another language was preferred, or even the
possibility that a pidgin was created: international armies are natural melting pots, and both the
use of a lingua franca and the creation of pidgins are recorded among them (see e. g. Amory,
People, 106; Nevalainen/Raumolin-Brunberg, Sociolinguistics).

[99] Geertz, Native, 40.

[100] Kratz, Aramäer.

[101] Possibly also B3.8 and B5.2, but the ethnic label is missing for the second contractor.

only exception is B2.6), unless the text mentions a judicial oath (B2.8; B7.2: see above; exception is B2.2).

In B2.6, *ʾsḥwr* asks *mḥ[syh ʾ]rmy zy swn* for his daughter *mptyh* in marriage; since *ʾsḥwr* is likely Egyptian, or at least non-Judean, we would expect *mḥsyh* to use the ethnic label "Judean" rather than "Aramean." However, *ʾsḥwr* is going to marry his daughter, and to be part of the Judean community, eventually taking the name *ntn* and giving his children Yahwistic names: it is thus possible that *mḥsyh* did not consider necessary to stress his "Judeaness."

The use of the ethnic label "Judean" instead of "Aramean" seems sometimes arbitrary.

In B2.9, *mnḥm* and *ʿnny*, sons of *mšlm*, said to be *yhwdyn,* withdraw from goods owned by *ydnyh* and *mḥsyh*, sons of *ʾsḥwr br ṣḥʾ* by *mbṭḥyh brt mḥsyh*, and also said to *be yhwdyn*. This is the only case in which the ethnonym "Judean" is used for both contracting parties. We may think that the foreign name of the father of *ydnyh* and *mḥsyh* suggested to specify that they were actually Judeans, as well as the name of their mother, which is otherwise omitted in the contracts.

The term "Judean" is preferred also in B3.1 and B2.3, two contracts between a "Judean" man and a woman without ethnic label. In B3.1 a woman with a Yahwistic name, *yhwḥn brt mšlk*, "lady of Elephantine the fortress" (*nšn zy yb byrtʾ*) takes a loan of silver from *mšlm br zkwr yhwdy zy yb byrtʾ*. The same situation may be found in B2.3, a document in which *mḥsyh br ydnyh*, called *yhwdy*, gives a house to his daughter *mbṭḥyh*. In these cases, the ethnic label "Judean" is preferred even if the two women were obviously also "Judeans."

However, it must be stressed that the ethnonym Judean is always used when also the non-Judean contractor is labeled by an ethnonym (B2.2; B3.13; possibly D2.12). A very good example is the contract B3.13, which is the only text in which one party is labeled "Judean" and the other one "Aramean." This is quite significant, because if both contractors are designed by an ethnic label, and this label is *yhwdy* or *ʾrmy*, the same label is used for both of them; B3.13 is the only exception. In this text, *ʿnny br ḥgy br mšlm*, who is *yhwdy ldgl nbwkdry* borrows emmer/spelt from *pḥnwm br bsʾ*, who is *ʾrmy zy swn* of the same *dgl* and whose house is in Syene.

In this case, the man with the Hebrew names is explicitly called "Judean," while the man with Egyptian name and patronym, "Aramean," in spite of the fact that they serve in the same unity in the army.

This text makes quite clear that "Judean" and "Aramean" are not synonyms: "Judean" is used when identity must be stressed, to the exclusion of the "other," both in letters and in contracts, where however the more official term "Aramean" is preferred. "Aramean" is a generic label for arameophones, in particular for arameophone units serving in the army; as such, it is preferred as official label. "Aramean" should not be considered a proper ethnonym, indicating origin, but rather a cultural/linguistic/administrative/military label.

They are not synonyms, and they are not contradictory: they are simply two different nisbas, used for different purposes, different contexts, and different situations.

Appendix – Ethnonyms Occurring in the First Millennium Aramaic Texts from Egypt

Unless otherwise stated, the ethnonyms occur in Elephantine/Syene and are dated to the 5th century BCE.

Arabian

B8.1	Possibly *ʿrbyʾ*, "the Arab(s)" (if not *ʿrbyʾ* "the guarantors"); Saqqara.
C3.28	Col. 5: *ʿrbyʾ* (ethnonym "the Arabian" or ethnonym used as proper name); see also "Cilician" and "Ionian"; 3rd century; Thebes.

Aramean

B2.1	*qwnyh br ṣdq* grants a wall to *mḥsyh br yndyh*, both of the *dgl of wryzt* and both *ʾrmy zy swn*.
B2.6	*ʿšḥwr br* [*ṣḥʾ*] *ʾrdkl zy mlkʾ* asks *mḥ*[*syh ʾ*]*rmy zy swn ldgl wryzt* for his daughter *mpṭyh* in marriage.
B2.7	*mḥsyh br ydnyh*, *ʾrmy zy swn*, of the *dgl* of *wryzt* gives a house to *mpṭhyh* his daughter, the house that *mšlm br zkwr br ʾṭr*, *ʾrmy zy swn* sold him; two of the witnesses are said to be Caspian.
B2.8	*pyʾ br pḥy*, a builder of Syene (*ʾrdykl lswn byrtʾ*), withdraws from goods after the oath of *mbṭhyh brt mḥsyh br ydnyh*, *ʾrmyʾ zy swn*, of the *dgl* of *wryzt*.
B2.10	*ydnyh br hwšʿyh br ʾwryh ʾrmy zy yb byrtʾ*, before *wydrng* the garrison commander of Syene (*rb ḥylʾ zy swn*), withdraws from a house owned by *ydnyh* and *mḥsyh* sons of *ntn* and of *mbṭhyh brt mḥsyh br ydnyh*.
B2.11	*mḥsyh br ntn* and *ydnyh br ntn ʾrmyn zy swn ldgl wr*[*yzt*] divide the slaves of *mbṭhyh* their mother.
B3.3	*ʿnnyh* (also *ʿnny*) *br ʿzryh*, who is temple servitor of god Yahwe in Elephantine (*lḥn zy yhh ʾlhʾ zy byb byrtʾ*), obtains from *mšlm br zkwr*, *ʾrmy zy swn ldgl wryzt*, his servant *tmt* in marriage.
B3.8	*ʿnnyh* (sometimes *ʿnny*) *br ḥgy*, who is *ʾrmy zy yb byrtʾ* [*l*]*dgl* [*ʾdn*]*nbw*, asks *zkwr br mšlm*, who is [...]*y zy swn* of the same *dgl*, to give him his "sister"[102] *yhwyšmʿ* in marriage.

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[102] *yhwyšmʿ* is not the sister of *zkwr*, but rather his former servant.

B3.9   *ʾwryh br mḥsyh, ʾrmy zy swn*, asks before *wydrng, Guardian of the Seventh (ḥptḥptʾ)* and the garrison commander of Syene (*rb ḥylʾ zy swn*) to *zkwr br mšlm, ʾrmy zy swn*, to give him in adoption as free-man *ydnyh*, son of his slave (?) *tḥwʾ*.

B3.12   *ʾnny br ʾzryh* and his wife *tpmt/tpmmt brt ptw* sell to their son-in-law *ʾnny br ḥgy br mšlm br bss, ʾrmy zy zy* (sic) *yb byrtʾ ldgl nbwkdry*, the house they bought from *bgzšt br plyn*, who is *kspyʾ*, Caspian – i. e. the house of *ynbwly br msdy*, who is *kspyʾ* in *yb*.

B3.13   *ʾnny br ḥgy br mšlm*, who is *yhwdy ldgl nbwkdry*, borrows emmer/ spelt from *pḥnwm br bsʾ, who is ʾrmy zy swn* of the same *dgl* and whose house is in Syene.

B4.5   *nt[n] br hwšʾ*, who is *ʾrmy zy swn ldgl nbwkdry*, acknowledges that he borrows silver from *ys[lḥ] br gdwl*, who is *ʾrmy zy swn ldgl* […].

B4.6   *mnḥm br [šl]wm*, who is *ʾrmy zy yb brtʾ ldgl nbwkdry*, acknowledges that he owes money from the goods of the document of wifehood to *slw[ʾḥ] brt s[m]wḥ*.

B4.7   *pṭʾsy [br …]* acknowledges that he owes money to […*br*?] *nnyšwry*, who is *ʾrmy zy swn* (?[103]), before *šmrm*; Saqqara.

B5.2   *mtn br yšbyh*, who is *ʾrmy swnkn ldgl* […] withdraws from something to the benefit of someone of the same *dgl*.

?B5.5   *mpṭḥyh brt gmryh* states that she gave to her sister *ʾswry brt gmryh* silver and a ration in consideration of her support; Porten restores (once) and reads (once) *yhwdyh*, and once *ʾrmyh*; according to him, *mpṭḥyh* would be "Jewess of Elephantine the fortress (and) an Aramean according to her detachment," *ʾswry* "Jewess of the same detachment;" these readings/reconstructions are uncertain.

B5.6   Difficult text, with mainly Egyptian names; here occurs also *ʾrmy*, either as proper name or as nisbe; Saqqara; end 4th century BCE.

B6.1   […] *ʾrmy zy yb byrtʾ ldgl ʾdnnbw* (the groom in this marriage contract).

B7.1   […], of the detachment of […]*w*[104], is accused by *mḥsyh br šybh, ʾrmy zy swn*, of having stolen his fish; he must swear by *yhw ʾlhʾ* or (?) give a compensation.

B7.2   *mlkyh br yšby(h), ʾrmy* and hereditary-property-holder in Elephantine, *ldgl nbwkd[ry]*, must declare by *ḥrmbytʾl* that he did not commit violence and theft in the house of [ʾr]*tprd br* [ʾrwst]*mr*[105] *ldg[l] md/ry*[106].

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[103] Porten and Yardeni read *zy swn*, but the reading is very difficult (Segal, Texts, 53, text 35: *ʾmr/dt*).

[104] Porten and Yardeni: [ʾdnn]*bw*; Cowley (Cowley, Papyri, 149, text 35): [ʾrtbn]*w*.

[105] Cowley: [*br ʾrtp*]*rn*, but the reading ⟨m⟩ is sure.

[106] The *mem* is quite anomalous, if compared with the other ones; Cowley (Cowley, Papyri, 20, text 7): *nbw[kdry]*.

B8.4 *šmw br snbnt* (and?) *bryk'l* his brother, *'rmyn lnbwšzb*, with their father *snbnt* are mentioned (they try perhaps to free the sons/daughters of the people listed below); Saqqara.

B8.6 Difficult text. Among others: [… *br*] *hwbr'*, *'rmy ldgl byt'lšgb*, spoke against […], his mother (being) *tsry*[107]; mentioned perhaps also 2 *'rmyn ldgl 'l*[…][108]; Saites are possibly also mentioned; Saqqara.

D2.3 [… *br*?] *qwn 'rmy zy* […][109] *ldgl 'r*[*tbn*][110].

D2.4 […] *brt 'šyn 'rmyh* […].

D2.10 […] *'rmyh zy s*[*wn*].

S77 *'rmy ptyḥr*; the only letter in which "Aramean" occurs; Saqqara.

CG258 *tḥp/by 'rmt'*, "the Aramean" (inscription on jar?).

Babylonian

B2.2 One witness, *hddnwry*, is "Babylonian" (*bbly*), without patronym (see also "Choresmian").

D22.3 *pb/ty br šmn bbly*; graffito from Masarah, ca 300 BCE.

? S99 Perhaps […]*gyn bblyn*, but it is not clear what is Babylonian; Saqqara.

Bactrian

D2.12 [*b*]*rznrw br 'rtbrzn hw ptw* is Bactrian (*bḥtry*) of Elephantine, of the *dgl* of *mry*; he is one of the parties in a contract with *ydnyh*, hereditary property holder in Elephantine (*dgl* and ethnic label are lost).

? Bythinian

S31 *ḥqlt ḥyl' 'ny*[*q'*], "the fields of the Bithy[nian] garrison (?)"[111]; Saqqara.

? Cananaean

R38 *plynbl knny*, *plynbl* "the Caanaaean" (?)[112].

Carian

A6.2 *krky'*, "Carians," are mentioned; they possibly say that their boat should be repaired.

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[107] The *resh* is anomalous.
[108] The reading is difficult.
[109] Porten and Yardeni: [*ṣdq br*] *qwn*.
[110] Difficult reading.
[111] See WESSELIUS, Note, 705–706; highly uncertain.
[112] Difficult reading.

S26   *ywnyn wkrkyn*; *ywnyʾ wkrkyʾ*: "Ionians and Carians"[113] are mention-
        ed several times; *mṣryn*, "Egyptians," once. Maybe the text is an order
        to stop Ionian and Carian ships; Saqqara.

Caspian

B2.7   *wyzb*[*lw*] *br ʾtrly kspy* and *brbry br drgy kspy* are witnesses. See s. v.
        "Aramean."

B3.4   *bgzšt br bzw* is *kspy ldgl nmsw*; lady *ʾwbl/ʾbl/ybl brt štbr* is *kspyh zy swn
        ldgl nmsw*; they sell to *ʾnnyh br ʾzryh*, who is temple servant oh Yahwe
        (*lḥn lyhw*), the house of *ʾpwly br msdy*, which is in *yb byrtʾ*); two Cas-
        pian witnesses (among others): *ḥyḥ br ʾtrly kspy*; *byt wyzbl kspy*.

B3.5   *ʾwbyl brt štybr* and *bgzwšt* are *kspyn zy yb byrtʾ*; *ʾnnyh br ʾzryh* donates
        to his wife a house bought from them; house boundary: *bytʾ zy štybr
        kspy*; two witnesses, [.]*mtrsrh* and *tt*, are called *mgšy*, "Magians."

B3.12   *bgzšt br plyn* and *ynbwly br msdy* are called *kspyʾ*, "Caspian." *ʾnny br
        ʾzryh* and his wife *tpmt* sell to their son-in-law *ʾnny br ḥgy* the house
        they bought from *bgzšt br plyn* – i. e. the house of *ynbwly*.

C3.8   *ḥmtsn* is kspyʾ; he is mentioned in unclear context in the Memphis
        Shipyard Journal, found in Saqqara.

Choresmian

B2.2   *drgmn br ḥršyn* of the *dgl* of *ʾrtbnw* is *ḥrzmy*, Choresmian; he with-
        draws from the land of *mḥsyh br ydnyh* of the *dgl* of *wryzt*, who is
        called *yhwdy*, after an oath of the latter by *yhw* imposed by *dmydt*
        and his colleagues the judges; boundaries of the land are the houses
        of: *qwnyh br ṣdq yhwdy ldgl ʾtrwprn*; [*yz*]*nyh* (?) *br ʾwryh yhwdy ldgl
        wryzt*; *ʾspmt br ppṭʿwnyt*, "boatman of the rough waters" (no ethnic
        label is given for this man, presumably Egyptian); one witness, the
        only one without patronym, *hddnwry*, is "Babylonian" (*bbly*).

B2.3   The land of B2.2. is now a house, given by *mḥsyh br ydnyh*, of the *dgl*
        of *hwmdt*, *yhwdy*, to his daughter *mbṭḥyh*; *drgmn br ḥršyn*, *ḥrzmy*,
        "Choresmian," is mentioned again.

D3.39   A Khwarezmian (*ḥrzmyʾ*) and possibly a Sidonian (*ṣdny*) are men-
        tioned, but their names are lost; Saqqara.

Cilician

A6.7   *ḥyl*[*kyn*] and *ḥylkyʾ*, "Cilicians," are called the rebellious slaves of
        Arsames: *prymʾ*; *ʾmwn*; *srk*[114]; *tʾnd/ry*[115]; [...]*m(?)y*; *sd/rsbnz*; *ʾ*(?)[...]
        m; *srmnz*; *kʾ*; *bgprn*; *pytrʿnz*; *ʾsmrwp*; *mwsrm*. Unknown origin.

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[113] For *krk*, "Carian" in Aramaic, see MASSON, Noms, 410–411.
[114] DRIVER, Documents, 17, text 5: *srn*, but a reading *srk* is more likely.
[115] DRIVER, Documents, 17, text 5: *tʾnpy*, but *tʾnr/dy* is more likely.

A6.9   ḥlkyn tryn, "two Cilicians" are members of the group of *nḥtḥwr* during his travel. Unknown origin.

A6.15   *wrpš* orders *nḥtḥwr* to deliver 5 Cilicians (*ḥylkyn; ḥylky'*) to *mspt*; 10 Cilicians have been already delivered in Babylon. Unknown origin.

C3.28   1 document for 4 Cilicians (*ḥlkyn*) *mdl'* (unknown word) – possibly slaves? This is an entry in an account of sale, possibly a merchant's register. See also "Arab," "Ionian." Bought in Luxor by Sayce in 1906, possibly from Thebes (Qus). 3rd century BCE.

Cretan

B8.3   *tbrḥš*, a Cretan (*krtk*) slave of the unknown speaker, is stolen, probably with his daughter *tḥmpt*; the Hyrcanian (*wrkny*) *sḥh* is also mentioned, but his role is unclear; Saqqara.

Egyptian

A4.2   *mṣry'* are said to give them a bribe, and to be before Arsames and act "thievishly" (*gnbyt*, hapax legomenon); frictions between Egyptians and Jews are recorded; the letter is sent to *ydnyh, m'wzyh* and *'wryh*; the sender's name is lost.

A4.5   detachments of Egyptians (*dgln zy mṣry'*) rebelled; the priest of Khnum gave Vidranga bribe, and they made damages in Elephantine (contrast again; both the sender and the recipient are lost).

A4.6   *mṣry['/n*]; fragmentary text, context unclear, but someone is arrested; contrasts again.

A4.7   Letter from the Judeans of Elephantine to Bagohi, governor of Judaea. "Egyptians with other troops" (*mṣry' 'm ḥyl' ḥrnn*) damaged the temple of Elephantine; the other ethnic label in this famous letter is "Judeans" (see s. v.).

A4.8   Same as A4.7, but *mṣr[y' 'm ḥyl' ḥrnn*] is partially reconstructed. Moreover, the Egyptians are mentioned a second time: "the temples of the gods of the Egyptians" (*'gwry 'lh[y] mṣry'*; it is written *mṣryn*, "Egypt," in 4.7) are mentioned, because the Persians are said to have overthrown them at the time of Cambyses.

A6.10   *mṣry'* are quoted by Arsames because they rebelled in the past, but the former official, differently from the recipient of the letter, was able to protect the properties. Unknown origin.

D6.10   Perhaps *mṣry'* are mentioned in this fragment of the correspondence of Arsames. Unknown origin.

B3.10   "the protecting wall that the Egyptians built, i. e. the way of the god" (*'gr' zy hnpn' zy bnhw mṣry' hw tmw'nty*) is boundary of the part of his house that *'nny br 'zryh* gives to his daughter *yhwyšm'* after his death.

B3.11   Again, "the protecting wall that the Egyptians built" (ʼgr lḥnpnʼ zy bnw mṣryʼ) is the boundary of another part of his house that ʻnny br ʻzryh gives to his daughter yhwyšmʼ, not already given as dowry as she married ʻnny br ḥgy br mšlm br bss.

C3.19   mṣry, "Egyptian," is likely referred to wine (verso); all the names are Egyptian (account). Memphis or Saqqara are given as provenance by Trismegistos.

D2.30   [k/ḥ]mrn ʼlk tryhn mṣryn, "those two priests/asses/ass-drivers, Egyptians (or Egypt?)" occur in unclear context; Saqqara.

D8.4   mṣryʼ, "the Egyptian," was probably erased (?), but it may be referred to twdrs (?), Θεόδωρος; 3rd century BCE; the text was bought in Edfu by Schmidt, but its provenance is unknown.[116]

S26   ywnyn wkrkyn; ywnyʼ wkrkyʼ: "Ionians and Carians" are mentioned several times; mṣryn, "Egyptians," once. Maybe the text is an order to stop Ionian and Carian ships; Saqqara.

S41   "Egyptians" (mṣryn; or "Egypt"?) occur twice, possibly referred to money, less likely to persons; Saqqara.

Hyrcanian

B8.3   tbrḥš, a Cretan (krtk) slave of the unknown speaker, is stolen, probably with his daughter tḥmpt; the Hyrcanian (wrkny) sḥh is also mentioned, but his role is unclear; Saqqara.

Ionian

C3.7   ywny "Ionian" occurs several times (47, but sometimes restored): ywny, or, more rarely, ywnyʼ, ref. to the captain(s)/owner(s) of the ship: mr.g.s br pq. [yw]ny; šwmn br šmnds ywny; tmt[.].; …gwt[…]; p[…]tln br msks; […] br ʼrgl[s]; tmkts br mks ywny; […] br .mn ywny; glpr[s br … yw]ny; šm[…]ḥ; k/prystn br prytkm [yw]ny; ywkls br š[…]; pns b[r …]; […]ln ywny; […]sy ywny; tm[…]; …mn…; [s]pytk[117] ywny; […]kls ywny; prtwkls ywny; glprs y[w]ny; […]mrsls; gl[…]; šm[…]n; glprs ywny; š(.)[…]; hpw(.)[…]; ywkls yw[ny]; pns ywn[y]. Ahiqar palimpsest, found in Elephantine but probably written in Memphis or Migdol.[118] The other ethnic label is "Sidonian," referred to wine.

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116 SACHAU, Papyrus, vol.1, 230.
117 Porten and Yardeni consider doubtful the reading of all the letters bur ⟨t⟩; according to the drawing, ⟨s⟩ is particularly problematic, since only a very small ink trace is visible.
118 Erased text, difficult to read. See also YARDENI, Trade.

C3.28   *yny'* occurs several times; Merchant's register (?): Sales, inventory (list of different products, which are in different hands); see also "Arab" and "Cilician"; 3rd century; possibly from Thebes?

S26   *ywnyn wkrkyn; ywny' wkrky'*: "Ionians and Carians" are mentioned several times; *mṣryn*, "Egyptians," once. Maybe the text is an order to stop Ionian and Carian ships; Saqqara.

Judean

A3.8   *yhwdy'* are mentioned: "when the Judeans will bring them before [...]". The sender of the letter is probably *hwš'*, but the names are mixed.

A4.1   Letter sent to *ydnyh* and "his colleagues of the Judean garrison" (*knwth ḥ[yl'] yhwdy'*).

A4.3   The letter, which probably testimonies the first problems with Vidranga, is sent by *m'wzyh br ntn* to *ydnyh* with *'wryh* and "the priests of Yeb", but at the end is said to be sent also to the Judeans (*yhwdy'*).

A4.7   Letter from the Judeans of Elephantine to Bagohi, governor of Judaea. It is said that a letter was sent to the priests in Jerusalem and to the nobles of the Judeans (*ḥry yhwdy'*); moreover, are mentioned "the Judeans, all citizens of Yeb" (*yhwdy' kl b'ly yb*) as co-senders (with *ydnyh* and the priests), and "all the Judeans who are here" as group praying for Bagohi, if he would help them. The other ethnic label in this letter is "Egyptians" (see s. v.).

A4.8   As in 4.7, but the nobles are called "nobles of Judah" (*ḥry yhwd*).

B2.2   *drgmn br ḥršyn* of the *dgl* of *'rtbnw* is *ḥrzmy*, Choresmian; he withdraws from the land of *mḥsyh br ydnyh* of the *dgl* of *wryzt*, who is called *yhwdy*, after an oath of the latter by *yhw* imposed by *dmydt* and his colleagues the judges; boundaries of the land are the houses of: *qwnyh br ṣdq yhwdy ldgl 'trwprn*; [*yz*]*nyh* (?) *br 'wryh yhwdy ldgl wryzt*; *'spmt br ppṭ'wnyt*, "boatman of the rough waters" (no ethnic label is given for this man, presumably Egyptian); one witness, the only one without patronym, *hddnwry*, is "Babylonian" (*bbly*).

B2.3   The land of B2.2. is now a house, given by *mḥsyh br ydnyh*, of the *dgl* of *hwmdt*, *yhwdy*, to his daughter *mbṭḥyh*; *drgmn br ḥršyn*, *ḥrzmy*, "Choresmian," is mentioned again.

B2.4   *mḥsyh br ydnyh* ldgl hwmdt is likely called *yw[dy z]y yb*[119].

B2.9   *mnḥm* and *'nnyh*, sons of *mšlm br šlmm* and Judeans of Elephantine of the *dgl* of Iddinabu (*yhwdyn zy yb byrt' ldgl 'dnnbw*) withdraw from goods owned by *ydnyh* and *mḥsyh,* sons of *'sḥwr br ṣḥ'* by *mbṭḥyh brt mḥsyh*, Judeans (*yhwdyn*) of the same detachment.

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[119] The reading is difficult.